

UC-NRLF

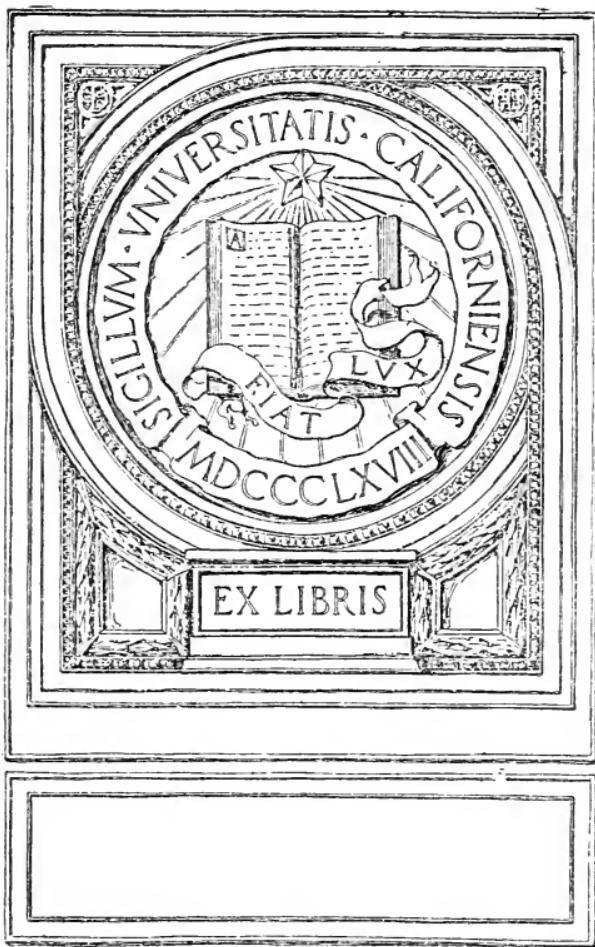


B 4 008 173

SOCIALIST PARTY IN THE REICHSTAG AND THE DECLARATION OF WAR

BY

P. G. LA CHESNAIS



}

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY IN THE REICHSTAG
AND THE DECLARATION OF WAR**

THE SOCIALIST PARTY IN THE REICHSTAG

AND THE DECLARATION OF WAR

BY

P. G. LA CHESNAIS

T. FISHER UNWIN, LTD.
ADELPHI TERRACE, LONDON



First Published in 1915.

[*All Rights Reserved.*]

CONTENTS

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|---|------|
| INTRODUCTION | 7 |
| I. CRITICISM OF THE DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS (23RD-31ST JULY) | 13 |
| II. ATTITUDE OF THE GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL UNION | 34 |
| III. THE STATE OF SIEGE AND THE SESSION OF THE 4TH AUGUST | 51 |
| IV. THE SITTING OF THE 4TH AUGUST | 75 |
| V. CONCLUSION | 99 |

APPENDICES

| | |
|--|-----|
| APPENDIX I. THE VOICE OF LONDON.—A CONFIR- MATION | 119 |
| APPENDIX II. THE AUSTRIAN SOCIALISTS | 125 |

INTRODUCTION

German national pride assumes to-day an alarming aspect. Pan-Germanism seems to have completely contaminated men's minds in the country of Leibnitz, Kant, and Goethe. The greatness of Germany has aroused a kind of egotistical, exclusive, morose and pedantic idealism which excites an enthusiasm, sombre and brutal, it is true, but strangely unanimous and determined. It cannot be denied that this enthusiasm has developed a formidable moral force in the German armies.

Nothing which we can imagine is more at variance with the spirit of Socialism, or even with that of simple democracy, or with the internationalism of intellectual forces, than an overwhelming patriotism which would tend to establish the predominance of a so-called superior people.

However, the representatives of the Socialist party in the Reichstag voted for the War Credits. They voted for them after hearing Bethmann-Hollweg confess that it was Germany who had presented the ultimatum both to Russia and to France, and this without offering any sort of serious justification for so doing. The Socialist deputies listened with astounding tranquillity to Bethmann-Hollweg while he declared that Germany was about to violate Belgian

neutrality without alleging any pretext, and not one of them stood up to cry shame. Instead of uttering that cry, a cry to which they have often given vent in protest against a crime of no extraordinary magnitude, they were content to win the applause of the whole house by reading the Declaration in which they said "We wash our hands of it." They then proceeded to vote. Bethmann-Hollweg was a high functionary of considerable mark. They were the guardians of a principle which they betrayed. On them is the shame.

But why did they betray the principle which they represented?

People naturally say that if Pan-Germanism has so disordered the brains of a great number of scholars of indisputable worth in the field of science as to render them capable of publishing unparalleled nonsense, it may well be that it has found a place among the conceptions of the German Socialist deputies. It may have done so all the more easily, and even without their being conscious of it, for the reason that they were in the habit of looking upon the world of economic phenomena as the only real world, so that they were less shocked by any appearance of contradiction between it and the political world which actually presented itself to their senses. They were conscious of being German patriots, but doubtlessly without suspecting that their patriotism was of an arrogant nature. They had not grasped the democratic notion of a society of nations equal in the eye of

law. They had a sincere horror of war, and while believing in the superiority of their country, they did not apply this belief in the same spirit as did the German Administration. But to many of them, at least, the idea of a German Hegemony was not repugnant. In brief, they also were suffering from the Pan-Germanist fever.

It will be said that every accused person must be heard in his defence, and that Germany having suddenly become a closed country from the 31st July, owing to the proclamation of the existence of "a state of danger in view of impending war," we have no certain knowledge of the reasons which induced the German Socialist deputies to vote for the credits.

This is true; there are many details concerning which we are still without information. The present work is, therefore, but one of the first documents of a file which we shall be able to complete later on. But the story of the meeting of the 4th August is known, as is also the speech of Bethmann-Hollweg, and Haase's Declaration which was the answer to it. That is a sufficient material on which to draw up the indictment. The remainder of the evidence can only serve to explain the genesis of the crime.

Then again, the German Socialist deputies have been perfectly free to defend themselves. The Belgian Socialists put direct questions to several of them. They had information on certain points through the Dutch Socialists. It would have been possible at the Copenhagen Conference for them to have sent a

memorandum in justification of their attitude. They were free to insert a defence in the Socialist organs published in the German language in Switzerland or in the United States. Representatives of the German Socialist party explained in the Swedish Press and elsewhere the reasons for their conduct, and manifested their pride in it. The leaders of the party do not plead extenuating circumstances ; they are satisfied with themselves. What they write throws no new light on their conduct and only proves the grave character of their ailment.

We are justified, therefore, in passing judgment on them, a judgment which it may be possible afterwards slightly to modify, but not to rescind. It is necessary, moreover, to pronounce this judgment at once, for we shall have to decide shortly, before the terms of peace are discussed, under what conditions it will be possible to revive the Socialist International Union.

The plea which the French Socialists with laudable zeal invented to excuse the German Socialist deputies, when it was known that they had voted for the loan, was that these deputies must have been ill-informed and misled. But they had to abandon this plea when they became aware of the speeches which had been delivered. It is important, however, to know how far they were cognisant of the diplomatic negotiations and what construction they put upon them. Misled they certainly were, but to what extent ? It is this question which is discussed, in particular, in this work with reference to the articles which have appeared in

the *Vorwärts*, and with reference to the different periods which have to be considered—the period of the negotiations up to the 31st July, the meeting of the International Socialist Committee, the period of the proclamation as to the imminence of war, the meetings of the representatives in Parliament, and the meetings of the Socialist Parliamentary group and of the Reichstag.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY IN THE REICHSTAG AND THE DECLARATION OF WAR

CHAPTER I

CRITICISM OF THE DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS (23RD-31ST JULY)

ON casting a glance at the July issues of the *Vorwärts* one is surprised to see how greatly the articles in condemnation of armaments and militarism predominate. On the first page in particular, hardly any other subject appears to be discussed. It is clear that the German Socialists had a stronger perception of the danger than the French Socialists. But it was a purely intuitive perception, a mere reflex of the exaggerated Chauvinism of the bourgeois Press. They were concerned only with general considerations and not with an analysis of the political situation; a case in point was the long study of "Militarism and Democracy" which was concluded in the issue of the 9th July.

The following are the titles of some of the articles

which appeared on subsequent days, most of them as editorials. On the 10th July, "The Charm of War"; on the 12th, "Disarmament"; on the 13th, "Eighty Thousand Cartridges" (with reference to the Mannesmanns and Morocco) and "Towards a Franco-German Understanding"; on the 14th, "The Threatened Dreadnoughts"; on the 15th, "The Increase of Armaments"; on the 16th, "The Applause of the Crown Prince" (with reference to the congratulations addressed by the Crown Prince to the author of the pamphlet which bore the title "The Decisive Hour of the German Empire," in which it is said that the enemies of the Empire will be ready by the spring of 1915); on the 17th, "French Militarism" (with reference to the Humbert interpolation); on the 18th, "In Atonement for Saverne" (with reference to the condemnation of a Socialist to whom the Saverne affair had suggested some reflections of a general character); on the 19th, "Already Another Telegram" (with reference to congratulations sent by the Crown Prince to a certain militarist writer, an incident which caused the journal to remark that "the continued interference of the Crown Prince in politics must be regarded as a very serious warning, a graver warning than we have hitherto received, to resist personal government"); on the 20th, "An Address to M. de Falkenhayn" (with reference to a work entitled "Twenty Years an Infantry Officer in Reichsland"—that is, in Alsace-Lorraine).

But the hereditary Archduke Francis Ferdinand had been killed on the 28th June. From that moment

Austria had been engaged in inquiring into the causes of the assassination in a manner calculated to bring about the long-contemplated war with Serbia. The attitude of the Austrian Government was singular. At first disquieting rumours were spread abroad, but presently it was asserted that Austria would act with great moderation. It was understood in diplomatic centres that grave events were about to take place. The Austrian Press, and still more the Hungarian, were much excited. The *Arbeiter Zeitung* of Vienna, an organ of the Austrian Socialist party, devoted to Serbia and the foreign policy of the Austro-Hungarian Government, almost every day, lengthy articles in which it displayed both lively distrust of Serbian nationalism and a constantly increasing uneasiness as to Austrian diplomacy.¹

For the *Vorwärts*, until the 21st July, this matter was only a secondary question, and the facts only were recorded. It is sufficient to cite the single article published on the 16th July, under the title "Steps Taken in Serbia," in which a lukewarm friendliness is shown for "this disorderly kingdom which has so much on its conscience."

But three days before the dispatch of the Austrian Note the Serbian question takes a place in the foreground. The tone changes. The article of the 21st July bears the heading "More Persecution of Serbia," and in imitation of the *Arbeiter Zeitung* it criticises

¹ See Appendix No. 2.

as follows the attitude of the Austro-Hungarian Government :

“ People may hold different opinions as to whether the Imperial and Royal authorities are justified in crushing under their feet the political aspirations of these already oppressed provinces of the monarchy, but there should be no divergence of views as to whether it amounts to a persecution of the Serbian people to be so far carried away by the desire to force on a war at all hazards as to hold the entire population of Serbia responsible for the crime of a fanatic, even before the circumstances of the crime are known.”

On the day on which the Note was delivered, namely, the 23rd July, and consequently before anything was known of its nature, appeared the article “ Signs of Approaching War.” In this and in all the following quotations the italics occur in the original :

“ . . . *Beyond doubt there is to-day an incomparably greater risk that war will be declared on Serbia than there ever has been.* This risk is more serious and more imminent than it was in 1908-9 and 1912-13. . . . It is very possible also that the Austrian rulers *desire war*, and it may be even that the flames of their war fever *have been nourished from Berlin*.”

These words “ *it is very possible* ” do not amount to an assertion : clearly it is not easy to be certain

about such matters, and even if one were sure, it would be a thing difficult to assert; but the *Vorwärts* foresaw the future from the very beginning, before the document which gave away the secret had become known. It had a vision of the truth, at least in the form of a possibility, and already its thoughts are turned towards a general war; for it emphasises as follows the factors which will enable a judgment to be formed as to the German Government's desire for peace:

“ . . . Under present circumstances Pan-Serbianism, more than anything else, renders probable the outbreak of a European war; the greatest menace against the peace of civilised Europe comes from Belgrade. But this being so, it is the duty of the Government of the German Empire to invite the whole of Europe, that is, all the great Powers, to adopt in common the necessary measures to bring the Serbian agitators to a calm and cool common sense; yet the statement of the ‘Chancellor’s Journal’ to the effect that the conflict would be ‘*localised*’ is rather an incentive to war on the part of Austria than an assurance that peace would be the first consideration. Only a month before the grand muster of the proletariat classes of all nationalities, we are passing anxious and trying days in Austria.”

A marked distrust of the Serbians is plainly indicated in this passage. These agitators are exceedingly

troublesome, but it is easy to bring them to reason if, in reality, there is no ulterior intention. The policy and the responsibility of Austria and Germany are suggested by the *Vorwärts* just because this ulterior intention is quite apparent to it.

On the 24th July the text of the Austrian Note had become known, and the editorial of the 25th, under the heading “War?” indignantly denounces Austria :

“They wish for war, these people without conscience who are influential and can turn the scale at the Hofburg in Vienna. They wish for war. War has been for weeks since the cry of the noisy Yellow Press. They wish for war. This is made clear to the whole world by the Austrian ultimatum.”

The ‘Journal’ next proceeds to give proof, and this without difficulty, of Austria’s desire for war, despite the fact that she could have obtained, short of that, the satisfaction of such of her claims as were legitimate ; but her object was to compensate herself for the checks which her Imperialist policy had encountered in the Balkans. The article concludes as follows :

“It was a crime on the part of the Chauvinist Press of Germany to irritate so acutely the belligerent notions of our good ally, and no doubt Bethmann-Hollweg promised M. Berchtold to *take him under his wing*. But a no less dangerous game is being played at Berlin than at Vienna. It is

easy to see where a gambling policy begins, but not so easy to see where it will end, and if it results, in this case, in a great European conflict, many things which are reckoned even in Germany as 'among the most sacred possessions' may be carried away with the stream. Therefore, just as the working classes of all countries should be on their guard against the danger of universal war with which we are threatened, so it is the duty of the German Government at the moment which it considers the most opportune, if it has the preservation of peace at heart, to control, though at the twelfth hour, the raging fanatics of Vienna.

"This and nothing else is the desire of the German people in view of the black clouds on the horizon."

The next day—as soon as the rupture of diplomatic relations between Austria and Serbia became known—the following manifesto was published :¹

Manifesto of the German Labour Party

The Balkans are still reeking with the blood of

¹ NOTE.—I have not been able to obtain the issues of the *Vorwärts* of the 26th to the 31st July. The extracts which I give here have been translated from the Swedish translation which appeared in the issue of the *Tiden* which publishes the documents (August and September, 1914), a periodical under the direction of Hjalmar Branlig and Richard Sandler. The first of the German documents published by the *Tiden* is the Manifesto of the German Labour Party which bears no indication of its date or of its source. But its contents leave no doubt as to the date, and it appears moreover in *L'Humanité* of the 28th July.

thousands of murdered men. Still the reek rises from the depopulated villages and pillaged towns. Crowds without work and without food, widows and orphans, are wandering over the country-side, and yet this is the moment when the Furies of War, set loose by Austrian Imperialism, are again preparing to spread death and destruction over Europe.

If we condemn the designs of Pan-Serbian nationalism, the senseless provocation of war on the part of the Austro-Hungarian Government calls for our energetic protest. The demands of this Government, directed against an independent nation, are characterised by a violence to which no parallel can be found in history, and can have had no object in view except the provocation of war.

The proletariat of Germany, in the name of civilisation and humanity, records its impassioned protest against the criminal intrigues of the instigators of war. It firmly demands that the German Government shall use its influence with the Austrian Government with a view to the preservation of peace, and that, if this terrible war cannot be prevented, at least the German Government shall in nowise take part in the conflict. Not a drop of German blood should be sacrificed to the insane ambition of the rulers of Austria or the speculations of Imperialism.

Comrades, we call upon you to give voice in vast meetings to the unshaken desire for peace on the part of the proletariat. This is a critical moment, the most critical since scores of years. The danger is

drawing near. We are threatened with a general war. The ruling classes who, in time of peace, hold you in bondage, despise you and make use of you for their own ends, now think to employ you as food for cannon. Let the governing classes hear, on every side, your cry : " We won't have war ! Down with war ! Long live international brotherhood ! "

Up to now the position of the German Socialists is perfectly clear. They regard Austria as entirely and alone responsible. They do not suspect Germany of complicity, except in the matter of the " support"—diplomatic support, of course, is meant—which she was bound to promise to Austria. They see the drift which may bring the world to war. They consider that it is the part of the German Government to intervene at Vienna in the cause of peace, and they tell it so. At the same time they assert with great emphasis the desire of the proletariat that peace shall be maintained, and in discreetly veiled terms they hint at the possibility of a revolution following upon the universal conflagration.

The editorial of the 27th July endeavours to show how greatly it is in the interest of the German Government to avoid war :

" We need not, indeed, attribute to the German Government any remarkable intelligence or unusual scrupulousness in order to believe in her sincere intention, her loyal desire, to maintain peace, and we may, without hesitation, credit the Governments of the other European Powers

with the same desire. For they *must* know only too well that the ground is trembling under their feet, and that in consequence of some military disaster it might rend asunder and engulf them. By no means can the certainty of victory be assured beforehand. All that is certain—and this is true as regards all the States of Europe—is an appalling butchery, an economic ruin, internal disasters as great as the defeat of Jena.

“ Already influential voices in *Italy* have been raised to declare that Italy does not contemplate allowing herself to be dragged as a third member of the Triple Alliance into a war brought about by Austria’s venture in Serbia. Is it under these conditions that Germany, alone, with the blind trust of Niebelung, proposes to place herself in the front ranks in order to further the breakneck policy of Austria, even at the risk of universal war ? ”

Moreover, the Russian and French Governments, fearing internal complications, are in favour of peace. These cogent considerations end with an examination of the attitude of the labour parties who are ready to do their duty to prevent the outbreak of war :

“ . . . It is obvious that the German Social Democratic Party would put its forces into line to take part in this bitter struggle.

“ *The essential thing is to prevent Austria from springing new surprises upon us.*

"German Social Democracy holds the German Government co-responsible for all the future decisions which Austria may take.

"The international proletariat stakes everything on preventing any aggravation of the situation!"

Up to this point, except as far as Austria is concerned, we have nothing but general considerations. But on the 27th we have at length some precise details concerning the negotiations, the tendency of which is discussed in the editorial of the 28th July, as follows :

"... It is indeed high time that recourse should be had to the most energetic diplomatic representations and the strongest popular protests.

"Happily, England has taken the initiative in the attempt to bring about a peaceful arrangement of the dispute. The four neutral Powers, England, France, Germany and Italy, according to the English proposal, would assume the part of mediators. It is a proposal equitable alike for all. Under these conditions any grievance which Austria is able to establish will be considered in a friendly spirit. She need have no doubt of this, seeing that Germany and Italy will be amongst the arbitrators. It follows that if Austria does not desire war at all hazards, and only seeks to obtain what is her right and guarantees for the future, she cannot possibly refuse the arbitration.

“. . . But this arbitration would take place on the understanding that reason is to triumph *at Vienna, Belgrade, and St. Petersburg.*

“. . . To encourage Austria to go to extremes, regardless of the representations of the Powers, and to give as quickly as possible a ‘sound lesson’ to Serbia, is a shameless and wanton incitement to war. *Those who write in this sense are mere political Catilinas who, behind the back of the German Government, and even in opposition to its explicit declarations, seek to create a situation which must necessarily result in universal war.*

“It is, in any case, a mark of unparalleled short-sightedness on the part of our Liberal Press to be constantly crying out the war should be localised. It would be a terrible crime if Russia were to come to the aid of Serbia, for that would compel German armies to move.

“. . . Notwithstanding, it is too dangerous to trust to the action of Russian revolutionaries and rouse to the highest degree the not inconsiderable power of Tsarism and Pan-Slavism *by encouraging Austria to continue in this savage provocative attitude.*

“*The greatest risk of war at this moment lies not in Tsarism, but in Austria, who, under the influence of bad councillors, is sustained by the mad illusion that she has but to give the signal to the whole of Europe to sound the call to advance and sacrifice the flower of its youth in expiation for the murder of the Hereditary Prince.*

" No, a thousand times no. The peoples of Europe refuse to be dragged perforce like cattle to the slaughter."

Farther on in the same issue we have the following article with reference to the Serbian reply :

" We have only now more precise information about the Serbian reply to the *brutal demands of Austria*. The extract from this reply which has been communicated to the public shows what important concessions Serbia is ready to make. There is scarcely a single point in the Austrian Note which was not taken into consideration in the Serbian reply, or even met with some degree of compliance. Naturally Serbia is not willing to surrender at discretion, or to renounce her independence—and an unconditional acceptance of the Austrian demands would have been the death of it. But Serbia was ready to accept the Austrian claims in so far as they were reconcilable with the dignity of an autonomous State."

The writer then enters into the details of the Serbian answer, and remarks that the fact that these assurances have not satisfied Austria, shows how little Austria was really disposed to clear up the matter with which she was concerned, and that her object was to *humiliate Serbia*, and even to go so far as to *make war against her*.

There follows a summary of the observations of the Government on the Serbian reply, followed by a

discussion of these observations, and the article concludes :

“ If Serbia proposed to refer the settlement of the dispute to an international tribunal, it does not appear to us that she was thereby either putting a slight on Austria or giving any indication that she considered herself to be in the wrong. Her object was rather *to find an acceptable solution*. If Austria does not desire an impartial inquiry she thereby makes it clear that the *ruling classes in Austria are not sure of their case*.”

Austria is still regarded as the only guilty party. The initiative of England is commended, while the German Press is blamed. The reliance just before so confidently expressed in the attitude of the Russian proletariat, just then on strike, grows weaker, and the power of Russia begins to inspire fear, although she is not accused of desiring to disturb the peace. The provocation clearly comes from Austria, and the warning given to the German Press is already a warning, though under reserve, to the German Government. In fact, up to this moment, Germany’s attitude was very obscure. When on the 30th it had become apparent, the *Vorwärts*, in an editorial of that date, exposes it in no ambiguous terms. The Socialist organ first demonstrates the danger underlying Austria’s formal declaration to the ostensible effect that she has no desire to annex Serbian territory. Putting aside the fact that in itself the conception of such a military expedition with a view

to the infliction of punishment is morally repugnant, how would Austria be able to arrest her progress when once the expedition has started? The article goes on to say :

“ England and Russia have failed in their attempt to obtain a suspension of the Austrian hostilities until the question has been reconsidered. Austria has refused because she wishes that the cannon should have the first say in the matter. Germany appears to have refused up to now to support this first and most important proposal, *the adoption of which would decide the question whether the world is to be involved in war.* This is an attitude which we fail to comprehend ; an attitude which beyond all doubt lays *the most appalling responsibility* on the German Government. And this before the German people, before foreign nations, before the Forum of history !

“ Already in France, where the preservation of peace throughout the world is desired not less ardently than elsewhere, it has been said that henceforth no one will be able to regard Russia, *but Austria and her ally Germany alone, as the kindlers of the universal fire and the true disturbers of the peace.*

“ In England it is a generally accepted belief that the *German Emperor*, being, as he is, the ally and the adviser of Austria, has only to shake the folds of his toga and *produce thereout peace or war.*

“England is right. At the moment at which we have now arrived *the decision rests with William II.*”

The Socialist organ recognises that William II. has shown himself to be a loyal partisan of peace, especially during the last few years. But there are influences which may be brought to bear, and these are unscrupulously active at the present moment. There is only one way of counteracting them :

“*Germany must exert pressure on Austria. This is what is required to-day more than anything else. The suspension of hostilities can alone open the door to negotiations of a conciliatory and reasonable character.*”

The same day, referring again to the Serbian reply to the Austrian demand, the German editor, who, as we have seen, showed very little good will towards the Serbian Government and even towards Serbian national claims, is moved to indignation at the outrageous pretensions of Austria, who proposed to interfere by force even with men’s sympathies. From the point of view of the Allies this is a matter which has not, in my opinion, been given sufficient prominence. A more powerful statement of it will not be found than is contained in the following passage :

“*Austria not only demands that the official Pan-Serbian propaganda should cease. . . . Her object is to root out of the world the existence—*

inevitable though it be as a factor in politics—of a 'Greater Serbia' propaganda, even although this propaganda is confined within the limits of international law and right, and she hopes to attain this object by *forcing Serbia herself to stifle* in a scandalous manner all free expression of thought. *Serbia is thus herself to give the death-blow to her aspirations for her future existence as a nation.* A Great Power has never made a more extraordinary demand on a weaker one! . . . It is urgently necessary that the European Powers should make Austria understand the preposterous character of such a demand, otherwise the outsider must presume that, behind demands which cannot possibly be satisfied, Austria secretly seeks a pretext for war."

Thus Germany's responsibility is made sufficiently clear by the diplomacy which she adopted regarding the Austrian question, as likewise by the very tenor of the Note to Serbia. But hers is an initial responsibility, and consequently a much more serious one, and one more difficult to expose. The *Vorwärts* tells us by what means we may discover how far the initial responsibility rested with Germany, namely, by watching what support she would give to the Austrian demands. This point, cautiously suggested in the article of the 30th, is discussed with much boldness the following day. After showing that the danger of war is becoming more and more imminent, the article continues as follows :

“ ‘It is Russia’s fault,’ cry out to-day in chorus the German instigators of war. We were never friends of the Russia of Tsarism, and we have a thousand times protested that the kingdom of the knout and labour massacres is the last to play the part of redeemer and liberator of the Balkan States. If *any* international Socialist proletariat group has ever acted up to its duty in opposing a policy of adventure initiated by an absolute Government and the criminal attempts to involve the world in war, it is the young and vigorous *Russian* proletariat. But our Imperialists, our bourgeois parties, and our statesmen pride themselves on being *realistic politicians*, who give due consideration at every moment to the circumstances controlling the political situation, and abstain from putting forward fantastic pretensions.

“ How is it that these ‘clever’ realistic politicians were able, and are still able, though it be but for one moment, to lose sight of the circumstance that it was necessary to regard the *close friendship of Russia and Serbia* as an existing fact, and to face this fact? How is it that Austria was allowed to act with her eyes shut and show no regard whatever for the policy of the Tsar, whose wishes it was moreover the habit of the German Government to respect even to exaggeration, and who one day received a telegram saying: ‘Russian mourning is German mourning’?

“ But let us not speak of the past, not even of the immediate past ; let us confine ourselves to the situation to-day. Let us examine the point of view that the Austro-Serbian conflict should be ‘localised.’ This ‘localisation’ Austria and the German Government propose to realise. There is no thought, they assert, of a universal war. The only matter under consideration is the dispute between Austria and Serbia, in which no other Power has any concern. But should Russia, in spite of all, come to the assistance of Serbia, that would mean the intervention of Germany, and, in short, universal war.

“ Even Russia shrinks from the idea of universal war, as do *all* the Powers interested. But the Austro-German Governments should understand that Tsarist Russia absolutely cannot from her point of view *entirely* abandon her protégé, Serbia.

“ No doubt, in consideration of the critical situation at home and of the influence of the French Government, which is resolutely bent on peace. Russia will, in spite of her mobilisation, impose all possible restraint upon herself, and will make considerable concessions. But it would appear to be out of the question to suppose that she will abandon Serbia *entirely to the mercy* of the Austrian punitive expedition.

“ Austria has solemnly declared that she has no *territorial* conquest in view. Russia demands also that the *political* independence of Serbia

shall be guaranteed. This is the actual situation.

“ Does Austria desire to impose upon Serbia conditions which would *remove her from the rank of an independent State*, or will she really be content with obtaining guarantees against fresh disturbances and Pan-Serbian outrages ?

“ Austria must give a *clear answer* to this question. Ambiguous diplomatic language and mutual threats serve no purpose here. This is a moment when a *firm foundation should be laid for negotiations and an understanding*.

“ And nothing would be easier than overcoming the obstacles in the way of an understanding if the trouble were not being dealt with with the stupidity of a bull.

“ It is not a conventional falsehood to say to-day that *all* the Powers are giving proof that they are ready to enter into negotiations in a loyal and conservative spirit. . . . Will Austria exhibit such an *inexplicable absence of moral sense that she will remain deaf* to councils of moderation, and will Germany remain determined to go wherever such an ally would lead her—at the risk of universal war ?

“ Not even to-day are we able to believe this. Once more we raise our voices in *loud protest* against such a policy of *unparalleled irresponsibility*.

“ As members of the political international

fellowship we address our counsel and our warning to those who are responsible among *all* the nations.

“ We warned *Russia* that by her mobilisation she is creating a state of things which may bring about the most bloody massacres, but which may, at the same time, bring about the fall of Tsarism. We conjure *France* to exercise all her influence over Russia so that the latter, with her heavy Cossack policy, may not involve France likewise in the incalculable horrors of a European war. But we also address very grave warning once more to the *German Government* not to stretch the cord too far. The German *people*, as has been shown by the demonstration of the German proletariat, *desire a continuance of negotiations, and a peaceful solution of the conflict.*”

It is not the fault of the German Socialists if they took a week to understand the workings of Austrian and German diplomatists, seeing that those of each country, while working in their own interest, were giving mutual assistance to one another in so skilful a manner that the majority of foreign diplomatists did not succeed in guessing their game. In order fully to appreciate the shrewdness and truly impartial spirit of this series of articles, we should have to compare them day by day with the publications of the Socialist organs in other countries.

CHAPTER II

THE ATTITUDE OF THE GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL UNION

THE *Vorwärts* followed step by step the diplomatic developments, and saw in what direction they tended. It expressed astonishment at the attitude of the German and Austro-Hungarian Government, pointed out the danger of this attitude, and showed how unjustifiable it is. It looked ahead and furnished the most decisive arguments against those who, later on, refused to believe in the aggressive intentions of Germany. The pacific tendency of this great Socialist journal has not been sentimental and vague, and has not taken refuge in general considerations based either on the calamities of war or on the difficulty of assigning the responsibility which is due to the capitalist *régime* and a system of an armed peace. The part played by each of the interested Powers has been separately examined and has been better understood than it has been by the office of the Imperial Chancellor. Germany's responsibility—indirect perhaps in that it was by Austria that she became involved, but still more probably direct—has been thoroughly and finally established.

This appreciation is all the more valuable because it is clear that the articles were not written in a spirit of opposition to the Government. By this I mean that one cannot detect in them any sign of pleasure in finding fault with the Government; no opportunity is sought of reproaching the Government. On the contrary, efforts are made to flatter it. When the tone becomes one of menace, it is veiled. The analysis of the facts is evidently inspired by a sincere desire to understand. To complete the conclusions arrived at, one phrase only is wanting: If you do not do what is necessary for the preservation of Peace, you will make it clear that you wish for War.

The *Vorwärts* prefers to believe—or to appear to believe—in the “bull-like stupidity” of imperial diplomacy.

On the other hand, while the analysis of the diplomatic negotiations is admirable, we must not look for general reflections on militarism, capitalism, or on the secret character of diplomacy even in most democratic countries, nor on the personal *régime* in Germany, etc. Although articles on such subjects are, generally speaking, very numerous in the *Vorwärts*, it seems that a separate place should be reserved for the expression of such ideas. They are not to the point when it is a question of precise facts. One might, however, well ask why the German Government was ready to face so imminent a danger of a general conflagration. The theory of the “stupidity of the bull” is certainly not a sufficient explanation. Had the

managing director of the party and the management of the journal duly reflected on the matter, had they reflected on the relation of the particular circumstances of these last days of July with the general political condition of their country, perhaps they would have been brought to a more just conception of the responsibility, not only momentary, but long-standing and permanent, of their autocratic Government, which they were accustomed to regard with too great a tolerance. But few of them, no doubt, were capable of correcting their judgment with regard to the Empire in so short a time.

At least they were not content—although that in itself was useful—to show by means of their Journal how clear was their vision. They organised a regular series of public meetings to protest against the war. They thus warned the people of the approaching danger, and they sought to counterbalance the action of the Chauvinist Press. Throughout the whole of Germany, and often in localities of little importance, the meetings appear to have been frequently held. At Berlin, on Tuesday, 28th July, a procession was formed in the Unter den Linden, singing the “International” and crying “Down with War!” It required a considerable force of police to disperse it. It was met by a patriotic counter-demonstration, and blood was shed.

However, the International Socialist Committee, in conformity with the decision of the Congress of Copenhagen (1910), which calls upon its members,

"in case of international disputes, to bring about an understanding with a view to common action between the Labour parties of the countries interested in order to prevent the outbreak of war," had met on the 29th and 30th July. The representatives of Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Poland, Russia, Italy, Holland, Switzerland, Denmark, Spain, and Austria-Hungary attended the meeting. France was represented by Jaurès, Vaillant, Sembat, Guesde and Jean Longuet. The only representative of Germany on the first day was Haase, a member of the Reichstag and President of the Partei Vorstand or Managing Committee of the Party. But as representative of Poland there was Rosa Luxemburg, an ardent militant member of German Social Democracy, who had just been sentenced to imprisonment for her propaganda against militarism. The Austro-Hungarian delegates were Victor Adler, F. Adler, Nemec (Czech) and Burian (Hungary). There was no Serbian representative.¹

Victor Adler, one of the most esteemed veterans of Social Democracy, was the first to be invited to explain the situation in Austria and to state what the Austrian associates proposed to do. In the name of the Germans of Austria he declared that the war against Serbia was very popular and that it would be very difficult for the Socialist Party to resist this movement, because the public saw in the war a means

¹ The following information in regard to the session of the International Socialist Committee has been furnished to me by a Spanish representative, Fabra Ribas, who has given me leave to publish it.

of strengthening the cohesion of the Austro-Hungarian kingdom. Under these circumstances the Socialists found themselves deprived of all means of defence, and all that they were in a position to do was, firstly, to protect the working class against the infection of the warlike and patriotic temper which was beginning to permeate the whole of the Austrian public ; secondly, to maintain the proletarian organisations during and after the storm. Finally, he asked the Committee, in consideration of the circumstances, to pass a vote of confidence in the Austrian associates, and a vote of censure on those responsible for the war, and to endeavour to arrange that the countries directly interested in the conflict should exert pressure on their respective Governments with a view to avoiding the complications which might result from the present state of affairs. Victor Adler declared that it would be necessary to abandon the idea of holding an International Socialist Congress at Vienna.

Nemec, speaking for the Czechs, could only endorse the assertion as to the impotence of the Austrian party.

Adler's statements produced a very bad impression. Haase and Rosa Luxemburg, filled with indignation, considered that it was impossible to continue the discussion in the atmosphere created by the speech of Nemec and still more by that of Victor Adler. Something quite different had been hoped for from the Austrian associates. However, Haase proceeded to explain the attitude of the German Socialist party, and asserted that the Kaiser already understood that

the party intended to create every possible difficulty with a view to prevent the outbreak of war. Semi-official representatives of the Government of Berlin had tried to feel the ground and convinced themselves of the strong desire on the part of the mass of Socialists to resist the designs of the Chauvinists.

Jaurès was strongly in favour of obtaining definite assurances as to the active part which the German party would be able to play. Amongst the messages which arrived from time to time was one announcing the disturbances which had taken place at Berlin on the previous evening. "We have begun," said Haase, "to demonstrate publicly our hostility to the war. Our protests will not cease. The energy which we have already displayed in the street will be similarly displayed in the barracks and in the Government administration."

The International Socialist Committee decided that the International Socialist Congress should be held at Paris, and on an earlier date, namely, on the 9th August. The following motion was unanimously voted by the delegates :

"The International Socialist Committee has to-day, at its sitting of the 29th July, heard from the representatives of all the nations who are threatened by universal war an explanation of the political situation in their respective countries. It has been unanimously agreed that an obligation lies on the proletariats of all the nations interested not only to continue, but to emphasise more and

more their demonstrations against war, and in favour of peace and the settlement by arbitration of the Austro-Serbian dispute.

“ The German and French proletariats will exert on their Governments a stronger pressure than has hitherto been exerted, to the end that Germany may be induced to bring a moderating influence to bear on Austria, and that France may dissuade Russia from taking any part in the struggle. The proletariats of Great Britain and Italy, on their part, will support these efforts with all their might.

“ The Congress especially convoked at Paris will be a means whereby emphatic expression will be given to the desire of the proletariats throughout the world for the maintenance of peace.”

The words pronounced at the great public demonstration organised on this occasion at Brussels on Wednesday, the 29th July, are better known than the proceedings of the International Socialist Committee. The Belgian Socialist organ, *Le Peuple*, published the speeches almost *in extenso* the following morning. Vandervelde presided and called upon Haase to speak first. The latter said :

“ The impression made by the crime of the declaration of war has brought thousands here to-day.

“ Scarcely has the disastrous situation in the Balkans come to an end before the furies of war

are let loose again. It is at this moment that Austria has chosen to provoke hostilities.

“Austria for twenty-five years has been seeking to strangle Serbia economically.

“Thus the ultimatum was in reality nothing less than an act of provocation designed to bring about a war already determined on and desired. Serbia’s reply was, as we know, drawn up in so moderate a form that, if it had been possible to assume good faith on the part of Austria, peace must have been secured. But Austria wished for war, and the appalling thought is that this criminal folly may steep the whole of Europe in blood.

“A telegram has given us to understand to-day that Austria did not wish to prolong the war against Serbia, but only to occupy Belgrade in order to give the Serbians a lesson. Is it not absurd and odious to play the part of the schoolmaster punishing his pupil?

“Austria would fain count upon Germany, but the German Socialists declare that secret treaties do not bind the proletariats. The German proletariat says that Germany must not intervene, even if Russia intervenes. The German bourgeois party consider that Germany will be bound to intervene because Austria has attacked Serbia. And as a result of an argument which is not less logical, and at the same time not less odious, the French bourgeois party hold that France will be bound to intervene against Germany.

“ The French proletariat thinks as we do.

“ Let our enemies take warning. It may be that the nations, weary of so much misery and oppression, will at last awake and found the Socialist community.

“ Yesterday at Berlin many thousands of proletariats protested against the war with cries of ‘ Long live Peace, down with War ! ’ ”

The tone of this speech could not have been less equivocal, at least on one point, and that is the absolute responsibility of Austria. This is perfectly in accord with the conclusions of the *Vorwärts*. And we must believe that Haase was equally in harmony with the Austrian delegates, seeing that none of them spoke in public. What, then, has become of the responsibility of the German Government ?

It is made to disappear by a two-fold stratagem. In the first place, Haase does not speak of the Government, that is to say, of an intention manifested by positive acts. He speaks only of the feelings of the German bourgeois party, or, in other words, of sentimental tendencies without decisive action. He makes no reference to any one of the facts for which the German Government is responsible, whereas he carefully enumerates the counts of the indictment against Austria. Moreover, he attributes the responsibility of Germany, and even that of the bourgeois party, to the Austro-German alliance ; so that they are merely suffering for the sins of the past ! But it is with the responsibility for the events of to-day that we are

concerned. The German Government were aware of the preparations made by Austria for the attack on Serbia, and they assented to those preparations, or, at least, if they were so wanting in intelligence as to allow matters to proceed without knowing or foreseeing the consequences, no conceivable treaty could be held to bind them to such an ally. At all events, such is the reasoning of the *Vorwärts*, and it is curious that the German Social Democratic party did not take advantage of this opportunity to display before the international proletariat an equally stern attitude towards the Imperial Government. But one cannot believe that Haase would have abstained from formulating reproaches against his Government "for the reason that he was speaking before foreigners"; that would be characteristic of bourgeois ways of thinking!

This fashion of ascribing the sole cause of the intervention, and consequently of the existence of German responsibility, to the Austro-German alliance, involved another and serious disadvantage, but one which at the same time furnishes an explanation of the motive of that fashion. The responsibility of France became thereby similar and equal to that of Germany. French initiative admittedly would come in only at the last stage—no thought had yet been given to England—but, on the other hand, German initiative would under that system not take the lead, since it would come into action subsequently to the declaration of war by Austria against Serbia, and that of Russia against Austria; Germany and France would be

together dragged into a conflict which was as foreign to one of them as to the other, by a common compelling force, namely, their loyalty to their respective alliances. But the parallel is misleading, for the German Government had given unreserved support to Austria from the very beginning, if indeed they were not leading her on, whereas there was no need for advice on the part of England and France to induce the Russian Government to work to the best of their power in the interests of peace. But Haase thus sought to improve the position both of Germany and of the German Socialist party in comparison with France and the French Socialist party; the responsibility of the two Governments, and consequently of the two sections of the International Union, became equalised by this stratagem. How could the German party be reproached with not having taken more energetic action if the French party, in a similar position, was doing no better?

The two parties had come to Brussels to ask each other mutually what they had done in the interests of peace, and what they still proposed to do; but their positions were not the same. The German party was without any real power, whereas the French party was in a position to influence its Government. But it was in Germany that pressure was required. No one yet knew that it was in reality the Imperial Government which was instigating the generalisation of the conflict, but, among the German Press of any considerable importance, it was the *Vorwärts* which had

arrived at the closest appreciation of the truth with regard to this matter, and in this it had done good work. But at Brussels, face to face with the French party, the German Social Democrats did not confess the full extent of official Germany's guilt, nor the full extent of Socialist and proletarian Germany's impotence.

The French Socialists were greatly at a loss how to reply to their German comrades. In the first place, they did not wish to humiliate them by reproaching them with an impotence which was only too real, at the very moment that they were asking them to make an effort. Secondly, they believed in the paramount responsibility of Austria, while, on the other hand, they had doubts of the peaceful intentions of Russia—a twofold reason why they should look upon the positions of the German and French parties as being less dissimilar than they actually were—so that they could not ask anything of their German associates without promising to give them as much in return. Finally, they knew that the German party could exercise no influence on its Government, and that consequently they were obliged to be contented with simple verbal declarations in favour of peace or at most public demonstrations for that end.

Jaurès, although suffering that day from violent headache, was the last to speak, "in the name of France and the International Union," and was greeted by a prolonged ovation, in consequence of which he began with the following words :

“ Citizens, I will tell my compatriots, my comrades, of our party in France, with what emotion I, who am denounced as a man of no country, have heard acclaimed to-day the memory of the great Revolution.”

It is no doubt “ the country with which the memory is associated ” that we must here understand. These patriotic words recall the memory of heroic times of which he was himself the historian, and were indicative of the military and political attitude which a few days later he would have desired to see his country adopt with a view to her safety in the hour of danger. But the preservation of peace, if possible, was his first object ; and therefore he did not dwell on that point. After laying stress on the part played by Austria, he frankly accused Germany, and then asserted without any reserve the peaceful tendencies of the French Government. That was the essential point of the answer demanded by Haase’s speech :

“ And Germany ? If she had knowledge of the Austro-Hungarian Note, then nothing could excuse her for having allowed such action to be taken. And if official Germany had no knowledge of the Austrian Note, then what is the meaning of this boasted wisdom of the Government ? How can you have a contract which binds you and drags you into war, and yet not know what may be going to drag you into war ? What nation has ever given such an example of anarchy ?

“ If one could read the hearts of the rulers, one might learn there whether they are really pleased with what they have done. They would like to be great ; they bring the nations to the edge of the abyss ; and then at the last moment they hesitate : Attila’s horse still inspires fear, while he stumbles ! We should take advantage of this hesitation on the part of our rulers to organise a state of peace.

“ For us French Socialists, our attitude is simple ; we have no need to force upon our Government a peaceful policy, for this is already their policy. I, who have never hesitated to bear the hatred of our Chauvinists, who have never turned aside from my object, and would not shrink from a Franco-German understanding, I have the right to say that at the present moment the French Government is desirous of peace and is working for the preservation of peace.

“ The French Government is the best ally, in the interests of peace, of the admirable English Government, which has taken the initiative in the attempt at reconciliation, and recommends prudence and patience to Russia.”

In what follows he shows himself too ready to admit a parallel between our position with regard to Russia and Germany’s position with regard to Austria. In so doing, he followed the example given on certain occasions by our diplomatists. Finally, with that

power of optimism and self-deception which were natural to him, but which he had systematically developed within himself, because he believed that optimism is a healthy quality and productive of energy, Jaurès concludes with an expression of satisfaction at the anti-war disturbances which had taken place on the previous day at Berlin. He speaks of 100,000 demonstrators, and sees in this fact a service rendered to the cause of humanity.

But it is not Jaurès who concerns us here. His speech, it is true, is interesting in that it determines the exact interpretation to be put on the articles of the *Vorwärts* and on Haase's words. But his speech appears to have been very ill understood by the German Socialists. They chose what was to their liking and distorted the rest. It was, as is known, the last speech which he delivered. Two days later a madman, who had been reading too deeply the Nationalist Press, fired a bullet through his brain. In the *Vorwärts* of the 2nd August an obituary notice (accompanied by a portrait of Jaurès) represents him as being above all the great propagandist of a Franco-German understanding, as though this had been the predominant idea for which he worked. It is true that he had this idea at heart, but it was only one of many. And it would be interesting to show how, withal, he had always been a passionate admirer of the French revolutionary tradition and of the whole history of French Socialism. At the same time that the great Socialist organ was thus distorting Jaurès' ideas, it suppressed

the essential point conveyed by his words in quoting a passage from his last speech.

“ I, who all my life have proclaimed the truth in my country, I, to-day have the right to bear witness for my country before Europe. I cry aloud that the French people, at this moment of excitement in favour of war and of provocation, desires unalloyed peace, without any afterthought or reserve, loyally and ardently, and desires that it shall be a lasting peace.”

If we compare this extract with the text of the speech as published by *Le Peuple*, we see at once that the *Vorwärts* suppressed the distinct assertion, evidently made deliberately and after due reflection, of the all-important fact that the French Government was resolutely bent on peace and was, in this determination, in sympathy with the English Government, whereas the two Germanic Empires were the disturbing elements in Europe. The statement is replaced by another of a very ordinary character concerning the pacific sentiments which were indeed already very well known to actuate the bulk of the French population.

The German Socialists exhibited at Brussels less boldness in their analysis of the diplomatic situation as far as concerned the part played by Germany than had already been shown by the *Vorwärts*. The embarrassment shown by Haase in the presence of the representatives of the French Socialist party sufficiently explains this attitude. He did not wish to

lay the blame on the Imperial Government because in so doing he would have rendered more arduous the task which the International Socialist Committee would have been obliged to call upon his party to perform. He did not wish to be constrained to make a humiliating confession and say : " We who represent the most important section of the International Union, and can count 4,000,000 electors, are without power and have no kind of influence in our country, and can do no more than give utterance to an idle protest." His party had, at that moment, the best intentions, but Haase promised, in its name, more than the party could perform. He did not wish to intensify the bad impression produced by Adler. In the presence of the French delegates he was reluctant to confess the real weakness of his party. Therefore he bluffed. This attitude was in itself to be regretted, but the subsequent mutilation of Jaurès' words in the obituary notice of the 2nd August is a circumstance which reveals a state of mind much more seriously open to moral censure. What could have more impressed the readers of the *Vorwärts* than the solemn declaration as to the pacific disposition of the French Government made by Jaurès in his last speech, and read immediately after he had been murdered ? All that was suppressed ! It is true that the obituary notice appeared on the 2nd August, and the sequel will show how sudden a transformation had taken place in the minds of the leaders of the German Social Democratic party as soon as war had become certain.

CHAPTER III

THE STATE OF SIEGE AND THE SESSION OF THE REICHSTAG ON THE 4TH AUGUST

WE have seen that the leaders of the German Social Democratic party, though scarcely well disposed towards the Serbians, and very distrustful of the Russian Government, were able, between the 23rd and 31st July, to detect with remarkable clear-sightedness, in the first place the intentions of Austria to lay violent hands upon her weak neighbour by means of a localised war and, in the second place, the responsibility of Germany herself in the general conflict which was threatening, and the outbreak of which was favoured by her intervention. Up to that moment they laboured in the interests of peace, organising public meetings and publishing articles which should have a salutary effect upon their Government if that Government had reason to believe that the movement would be carried on without intermission. But just at the decisive moment a change in the attitude of the German Socialists has to be recorded.

Things had not remained at a standstill. On the 31st July, when the German representatives at the International Socialist Committee returned to Berlin,

they were made aware of the proclamation of the *Zustand der drohenden Kriegsgefahr*, or "state of danger in view of impending war." Mobilisation was thereby decreed, the country was closed to the outer world, and a state of siege virtually declared as to matters concerning the Press, the right of holding meetings, and the forming of societies. General mobilisation was decreed in Austria, Russia, and Belgium. It was known that William and Nicholas were exchanging telegrams. It was still possible, therefore, to entertain some hope, however slight. The Emperor, on his return to Berlin, had spoken as follows from his balcony :

"Germany is to-day threatened by a serious crisis. Jealous foes in every quarter force us to defend a just cause. They fall upon us sword in hand. *If, at the last moment, my efforts fail to cause our enemies to reflect and preserve the peace*, I hope that, by God's will, we shall be so able to handle our sword that we shall replace it in its sheath with honour. War would require of us an enormous sacrifice of life and property. But our adversaries would learn what it is to arouse Germany. And now, I recommend you to God. Go to the Church, kneel down before God, and ask Him for His help in favour of our brave army."¹

The following manifesto was published on the

¹ From the *Vorwärts* of the 1st August. The passage in italics is printed in space capitals.

occasion of the proclamation of the "state of danger in view of impending war":

"Comrades, a State of War is declared to exist. Another moment may bring a declaration of war. Not alone our people, but the whole of our continent will then be put to the severest trial.

"Up to the last moment the international proletariat has done its duty on both sides of the frontier and brought all its strength into play with a view to preserve peace and render war impossible. If our grave protests and our constantly renewed efforts have been in vain, if the circumstances in which we are living are such that our wishes and the wishes of our brother-workers are in vain in face of them, we must now be prepared to meet with a bold countenance whatever the future may bring us.

"This terrible slaughtering at one another's hands of the peoples of Europe is an appalling testimony to the justice of the cry which we have been raising for more than a generation in the vain hope that our rulers would take warning.

"Comrades, we shall not look with the indifference of fatalists upon the trials through which we are shortly about to pass. We shall remain faithful to our cause, we shall continue united together, full of the greatness of our mission of civilisation.

"It is the duty of women, in particular, on whom these events will fall with double and

threefold weight, to work, at this grave crisis, in the spirit of Socialism, for the high idea of humanity, to the end that a repetition of this unutterable calamity may be avoided, and this war may be the last.

“ The stringent regulations existing during a state of war are terribly severe in their application to the labour movement. Inconsiderate acts, useless and ill-understood sacrifices would, at this moment, be detrimental, not only to individuals, but to our cause itself.

“ Comrades, we exhort you to patience, holding the unshaken conviction that the future belongs, in spite of all, to that Socialism which unites the nations, and to justice and humanity.

“ The Managing Committee of the Party.

“ *Berlin, 31st July, 1914.*”

We find in this manifesto the same idea which pervades the declarations or articles of the French Socialists at the same juncture, or rather the same desire, namely, that this war may at least be the last. But for the Socialists and, one may even say, for the whole of the French soldiery, this desire was more than a pious aspiration. It suggested to them a meaning for the war itself. They desired to crush Prussian militarism, in which they saw the only obstacle to peace. On the other hand, what is the meaning of the German manifesto and this empty formula which has no relation to any sort of action?

The proclamation is an avowal of total impotency ; they will bow under the storm and wait for it to pass by. Only two thoughts are manifested : the first, "Let us save the organisation, let us remain united, in order that the movement may not suffer too severely" ; and the second, which is more clearly expressed, "Let there be no folly, let us be wise : what we cannot prevent we must endure." This advice, besides being in all probability useless, was at least premature, seeing that German mobilisation had not yet been officially decreed, and that there still existed a hope of preserving peace—slight as it was. It was as though it advanced to meet the wishes of the Government, and said to them, "You need not be uneasy, we shall be the last to disturb you."

Under these circumstances it is clear that the *Vorwärts* could not continue to analyse the diplomatic negotiations as boldly as on the previous days. We may suppose also that the Censor would not have subsequently allowed so much liberty. We must not, however, exaggerate the change which had taken place in Germany in the circumstances of the Press. The conditions were much less altered than in France. There *L'Humanité* was suddenly reduced to two pages on the 2nd August, and the same was the case with most of the other newspapers. The *Vorwärts* continued to appear in six or twelve pages like the whole of the important German Press, with the feuillton, supplements and advertisements, and Germany has not become as closed a country as is generally

supposed, at least as regards news from abroad. The German Socialists have continued to be well informed concerning the negotiations. If there has been any change of tone in their articles it has been more in the nature of a change in the way of looking at things than in the conditions under which the publication of the Press is carried on.

The following are reflections concerning the events of the 31st July :

“THE CRISIS IN EUROPE.

“ The terrible destiny of which we gave warning when we foresaw it, and the progress of which we opposed with all our strength, appears now on the point of being realised in consequence of the declaration of war. The state of war has already been proclaimed in Germany, and, according to the statement of the Chief of our Armies, must be immediately followed by mobilisation. The final decision may then be given at any moment, and the last spark of the faintest hope of peace is about to be extinguished. William II. spoke himself on Friday evening, and his words echoed the terrible gravity of the situation. If his efforts for peace prove at the last moment to be in vain, war is inevitable.

“ The hope that peace will be preserved is all the weaker because to-day, amid the most feverish preparations on the part of all the nations, a state of nervousness, which it is not difficult to under-

stand, makes it exceedingly difficult to negotiate with calm and reflect with reason. And yet the country which would render to the whole civilised world service of untold value and one that future generations would applaud as a noble act of humanity, would be that country which would be able the longest to preserve its presence of mind and the control of its nerves.”

For peace might yet be preserved if conditions of a conciliatory character, and acceptable alike to Austria and to Russia, could be successfully formulated. But such conditions must have regard to the existing political situation, and must not leave out of consideration the political *rôle* of Russia. This point of view, which we have so often maintained, is now also adopted in the *Berliner Tageblatt* by Walther Rathenau, who is a leader in industrial circles.

According to the semi-official *Lokal-Anzeiger*, it would seem that in fact the Emperor has again vainly attempted, at the last moment, to get Russia to admit acceptable bases of accommodation. Russia has replied by the *general mobilisation of her army*.

This Russian mobilisation seems to us no reason for not *continuing most earnest and patient negotiations in support of a most loyal policy of peace*. No one can know whether Russia does not consider it necessary to continue its active preparations for war for the sole and only reason that the *Lokal-Anzeiger*, by its singular blunder, falsely published the news of German

mobilisation.¹ Besides, Germany has no reason to be anxious because of Russian mobilisation, since Russia, by reason of the organisation of its army and the extent of the country, needs an infinitely longer time for mobilisation than Germany does.

There is, then, still time for negotiation, and for averting the fearful calamity from the civilised humanity of Europe, and particularly of Germany, which, in the words of William II. himself, would have to suffer “enormous sacrifices of treasure and blood” if this fate is really inevitable.

We still cannot believe that it is at this moment inevitable, for no state, no group of powers, can count with certainty upon *victory, laurels and political advantages*. All parties must therefore be inclined to a *just settlement*, if only a proper way is found. And, in our opinion, in a situation so difficult and so complicated, there can be no more supreme triumph for the head of a state than to avert by his energy, his tenacity and his steadfast calm, the fearful fate of all nations, and particularly of his *own people*, so strangely involved in a common misfortune.

Walther Rathenau demands that the conditions of both sides should be published. This will probably not be done till the meeting of the Reichstag called by the Government for the 4th August, at the moment of the declaration of war. Then we shall know the

¹ During the 31st July, a special edition of the *Lokal-Anzeiger*, announcing German mobilisation, was cried and sold in the streets of Berlin, and was then confiscated.

official account of events, which will perhaps also be published by our neighbours in *official publications*. *Russia* and *France* will naturally describe the matter from *their* point of view. The future alone will reveal which account approaches nearest to the *true facts*; impartial historical research will establish that.

Such questions as “ Whose fault is it ? ” come too late to-day, and, above all, would be too late from the moment that the expected declaration of war has been made. Too late, not only for the reason that all independent expression of opinion has ceased with the suspension of the liberty of the Press, but also because it is idle to-day to speculate what it would have been better to do or leave undone.

To-day, at the last hour, at what is still the deciding hour, there is only one question : How, in spite of everything, can war be averted ? We can but re-state our opinion—the opinion of millions upon millions of the German nation—in order once again to warn those who are responsible that they must apply all their strength, all their energies, and all the cool calculations of their ingenuity, to the preservation of peace. The Socialistic proletariat of all countries is, in *one and the same* spirit, *in impassioned activity* against *all* the Governments.

If nevertheless the horror becomes reality, if this war of the nations drowns Europe in streams of blood, one thing is certain : Social Democracy bears no responsibility for forthcoming events.

Then follows a late telegram announcing, on the

authority of the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, the ultimatum addressed to Russia by Germany.

It will be perceived that the ideas put forward on the preceding days continue to find expression in this article. There is, notably, again an insistence upon the necessity for admitting as a fact the *rôle* of Russia as protector of the Slav peoples, and emphatic support is claimed in Walther Rathenau's opinion to the same effect. In addition, a new idea appears. Russia's general mobilisation was naturally at once represented by the official and middle-class papers as a proof of the warlike intentions of Russia, and as a menace which justified the gravest measures in reply. To that the Socialist journal opposes the decisive argument that Germany, for obvious reasons of a technical nature, need not disturb itself about that mobilisation, and can continue to negotiate calmly; the pretext which the German Government might find in the precautions of Russia is thus in advance deprived of all weight, all the more that the latter is justified both by the same technical reasons and by the premature announcement which appeared in the *Lokal-Anzeiger*.

But, on the other hand, the *Vorwärts'* criticism has weakened. It contents itself with saying that the Government can still save peace. It no longer reproaches it for acts which manifest a contrary desire. The statement of the *Lokal-Anzeiger*, a semi-official organ, is merely a "remarkable blunder." It seeks to flatter the Emperor by offering to him the praises that he might deserve. There is a show of believing

in the words that he spoke from his balcony : " If his efforts for peace do not succeed at the last moment . . ." It almost supplicates him, and promises him a "supreme triumph." That is not a dignified attitude.

And it bids good-bye to criticism. What do we know, and what shall we know on the 4th August ? Nothing, except what the Government sees fit to tell us ! That might perhaps be a warning to the Government that it must not rely on the simplicity of the parliamentary Socialist group and make it accept a garbled version of the diplomatic negotiations. In France, in the same circumstances, that is the meaning that would have been given to the passage. But in this place it obviously means : We have no confidence in their informing us ; we must submit to anything they impose upon us without even knowing whence it comes. It is a confession of weakness and consequently an invitation to abuse that weakness. An encouragement the more precious for William, as he was devoting all his efforts to confusing the responsibility ; it offered him a means of leading his people on, and, what was most important, of preventing Social Democracy from declaring against war. By renouncing in advance the claim to give judgment, the *Vorwärts* from the 1st August was unconsciously playing William's game.

And the paper concludes : " Social Democracy bears no responsibility for forthcoming events." Certainly, minors are not responsible.

I note, too, a disconcerting phrase : that which

mentions "the meeting of the Reichstag, called by the Government for the 4th August, at the moment of the declaration of war." The editor wrote it without misgivings, without dismay ! Does he admit that the declaration will proceed from German initiative, or does he think that the Kaiser is waiting for aggression by Russia ? He does not say. He was soon to know, for, in the latest news, the paper announces, on the authority of the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, the ultimatum addressed to Russia by Germany.

During the 1st August, orders for general mobilisation were issued in Germany and in France, and Germany declared war on Russia. But news of the declaration, made at St. Petersburg by the German Ambassador at 7.30 p.m., apparently reached the German Government only the next day, and then indirectly, having no doubt been delayed by the Russian telegraph ; this fact appears from an official communication to the Press on the 2nd August. At all events, it is certain that the newspapers did not know of the declaration on the 1st. It was under these circumstances that the article of the *Vorwärts* which appears on the second page of the issue of the 2nd (the first page being devoted to Jaurès) was written :

" Does the German mobilisation mean war ? The declaration of war *has not* yet appeared, and diplomatic relations between Germany and Russia are not even yet broken off. There still remains, therefore, a last faint possibility of preserving

the peace of the world. The *Militär Wochenblatt* itself shows clearly in its last issue that 'mobilisation does not necessarily result in war ; it may be decreed as an extreme measure of precaution ; as, for example, by Austria-Hungary in 1912.' "

And even though, under all the circumstances, hope of an understanding at the last moment between the parties is extremely small, it is still the most sacred duty of all statesmen who feel their responsibility to spare no effort to save Europe and their own country from the monstrous consequences and incalculable shocks of a world-wide war.

If diplomatic relations are not yet severed—that is doubtless the *proof* that the *German Government shares our point of view that measures of military preparation need not necessarily bring about the terrible clash*. Nothing would better satisfy the most ardent desire of the German nation—of all nations—than at the last moment to see the sword sheathed and the banner of peace unfurled.

In a special edition, the official North German *Gazette* gives *an account of the dispute*. As to the military aspect of the question, it says that as early as the 26th July there was positive information of a Russian mobilisation, but that the Russian General Staff had always, even up to the 29th July, given the German military attaché assurances that mobilisation had taken place only in the districts bordering on Austria. The official organ then deals with the

aggravation of the crisis which led to the German mobilisation, as follows :

“ On the 29th July the Emperor received from the Tsar a telegram in which the Emperor of Russia besought the German Emperor to come to his aid *at so serious a moment*. He begged him to avert the misfortune of a European war and to do everything in his power *to prevent his ally from going too far*. The same day the Emperor replied in a lengthy telegram that, in response to the appeal for friendly assistance made by the Tsar, he willingly undertook the task of mediator. In consequence of this exchange of telegrams, diplomatic action was immediately set on foot at Vienna. Whilst this action was proceeding, official news came that Russia had mobilised against Austria-Hungary. Immediately, in a fresh telegram, the Emperor intimated that the task of mediator, which he had accepted at the instance of the Tsar, *was compromised*, if not rendered impossible, by the Russian mobilisation against Austria-Hungary. In spite of this, the negotiation set on foot at Vienna was proceeded with, and the German Government warmly supported the propositions made by England, which had the same object.

“ The decision of Vienna was to be made to-day upon these proposals for settlement. But before this could be done, the German Government received official news that the order for mobilisation

had been issued for the whole Russian Army and also for the Russian Navy. Then the Emperor sent a last telegram to the Tsar, pointing out that his responsibility for the safety of the Empire forced him to take defensive measures ; that in his efforts to maintain the peace of the world he had gone to the extreme limit of what was possible, that the responsibility of the misfortune which threatened the whole world was not his, that he had always remained true to his friendship for the Tsar and the Russian Empire, and that the peace of Europe might still be preserved *if Russia ceased to menace Germany and Austria-Hungary.*

“ So that, while the German Government had commenced negotiations at the instance of Russia, the latter had mobilised all its armed forces, and thus threatened the safety of the German Empire which, up to that time, had taken no unusual military measure.

“ In this way the moment came, which calls the German armed forces to action, without provocation from Germany, but, on the contrary, against its desire, as the facts prove.”

In inspired special editions, obviously semi-official, these communications have been brought up to date. It is stated that the order for mobilisation was given by the Emperor, because at 6 p.m. no *Russian reply to the German ultimatum had arrived.*

With reference to this account, it is *extremely noteworthy* that the crisis became acute at the *very* moment

when an *English proposition for conciliation*, supported by Germany, was certainly directed towards a *definite general agreement*, and would thus have *secured peace*. For the influence of England over France, and by that means over Russia, is as great as the influence of Germany over Austria. Under such conditions, a settlement *could* not fail to be arrived at.

It is at *such a moment* that the worst had to happen and Europe be plunged irrevocably into the most frightful war of history.

Was *mobilisation* to be brought about, not only in Russia and Germany, but probably also in France, merely and solely by reason of mutual distrust and "*extreme prudence*?"

Another fact is equally surprising. How can the urgent request of the Tsar to the German Emperor for "*aid*" be reconciled with the continuance of mobilisation and the absence of reply to the Note? In affirming his love of peace, the Tsar may very well have been entirely *sincere*—as much because of the internal condition of Russia as from horror of a world-wide war pregnant with mischief. And, indeed, can we suppose that he was only playing a comedy? Or perhaps—for history furnishes only too many examples—a *bellicose clique* in Russia succeeded in its wicked design.

May not, indeed, the telegrams of William II. have been in part concealed from the Tsar?

We are assured that the German mobilisation took place only because we wished to avoid being surprised,

because it was necessary to be ready for all eventualities ! But then, just because of the consciousness of her strength and her readiness for combat, Germany would not forgive herself if she neglected any sincere effort for peace, however difficult the negotiations might be.

“ Peace may yet be preserved if Russia ceases to menace Germany and Austria-Hungary,” declared William II. in his last telegram. The danger of the Russian mobilisation has been parried by the much quicker mobilisation of Germany. The task now is to continue efforts to bring about a loyal understanding.

The difficulty does not lie in the essentials of the dispute. We have demonstrated that on numerous occasions. Much more dangerous, indeed, is the excessive zeal of underlings and of certain irresponsible circles which can at will by their policy thwart the aims of the Government and of William II. himself. What a *singular accompaniment* to the Emperor’s telegrams are the “ blunder ” of the *Lokal-Anzeiger*, which must have exercised the gravest possible influence on the attitude of Russia, and the excited and bellicose threats of a certain section of the Press in declaring that we had gone “ to the extreme limit ” to avoid “ the calamity which threatens the world ” !

There is no longer any trace of criticism. The Socialist journal relies upon the honest intentions of the Kaiser and has no doubt of his peaceful disposition. It only *reminds* him that Germany is strong, that she is

protected by her mobilisation, and that therefore she can negotiate without anxiety. It sees no danger to peace from the side of Germany save the action of certain irresponsible individuals or private institutions—particularly of the Chauvinist Press. It seems to forget that the *Lokal-Anzeiger*, which it cites as an instance, is a semi-official organ, and that its famous blunder could only have occurred in forgetfulness of a counter-order or as a calculated manœuvre. It believes that Germany is supporting the English proposal for quadruple mediation.

Moreover, it does not understand how anyone could wish for war, and comes to the conclusion that a mere examination of the essential points of the dispute shows that peace could easily be preserved. It even thinks that the Tsar has an entirely sincere love of peace, and that the irritating attitude of the Russian Government must probably be attributed to the machinations of a clique. Thus it is forced to attribute the origin of the impending war to nothing more than a misunderstanding which everybody regrets. A puerile idea of disappointed people, whose mind is no longer capable of serious analysis of the facts.

German diplomacy has often been said to show little psychological sense, and that is true. Yet we must recognise the ability with which the Government made use of all documents which might influence German opinion—particularly the telegrams between William and Nicholas. The *communiqué* of the 2nd August was a misleading summary of their contents, and

served to justify the declaration of war. The contradiction between the two Russian mobilisations and the despatches sent by the Tsar at the same time made the exchange of telegrams—although on German initiative—appear like an astute manœuvre of Nicholas II. The editor of the *Vorwärts* realises that the story of the *pourparlers* as thus presented is curious, or, at least, incomplete, and he speculates on possible intrigues. But he admits that Russia—whether clique or Tsar—has put itself in the wrong, and he has no objection to war other than the fact of mobilisation which safeguards Germany against surprise. The text of the telegrams was published two days later when the official interpretation had already sunk into people's minds.

In spite of the sudden importance which these despatches acquired, why does not the paper insist upon the grave and better-known fact of the ultimatum? Is not that the decisive act which shows which is the aggressive Power, seeing that the only justification alleged for it is the Russian mobilisation, and that this mobilisation, according to the *Vorwärts* itself, does not justify the rupture of negotiations? It would, no doubt, be too embarrassing to expatiate on a circumstance which puts the responsibility of the Government too much in evidence. The time of free criticism has passed.

But what strikes me particularly in the article of the 2nd August is the accent of despair. The editor is quite overwhelmed. He discusses the events of the

day from habit and because that is his work. But he has only one thought—to find even now a ray of hope; that is why he places his trust in the Kaiser, and goes so far as to believe—he, a German Socialist—in the sincerity of the Tsar's humanitarian sentiments. It would seem as if he had only just realised in his mind the horror of war, and that it raised in him a quite novel emotion. Up to then, doubtless, he knew that war was frightful, but he said so without fervour, for, as far as he was concerned, it was hardly more than a subject for abstract declarations of opinion. In regard to war he looked first of all to the attitude adopted by his own party. This was the reason why, in the course of the negotiations, he was able, with a free and bold spirit, to discern, at any rate as a probable hypothesis, the reality, however well hidden. After 31st July, war is no longer a subject for articles. It is imminent, and threatens the party, the country, and civilisation. The editor is stunned by it. From reading the *Vorwärts*, I have gathered the impression that the German Socialists did not believe war was possible. It was to them a myth, or at least a danger, as distant as it was for us from the end of Boulangism until the beginning of the Morocco difficulty.

In the issue of 3rd August, the leading article, which is very short, no longer contains analyses of the views of the day, but is given over to laments only. It ends thus :

“ In the presence of such storms, the tumult of

which is surrounding our cause also—the cause of Socialism—we have *only one* aspiration: may this wholesale massacre of the nations end as soon as possible, in order that all forces may again be available for peaceful human civilisation, and, above all, for the noble task of the liberation of humanity."

Immediately after the sorrowful expression of this not very confident aspiration, there appears an article in another tone, evidently the work of another contributor, and owing nothing to the device of italics. It is an article consisting of general reflections as to the manner in which Social Democracy ought to regard a war with Russia in 1914.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST TSARISM

The importance of popular sentiment in the conduct of war is very well known in governing circles. In our military literature there are many pronouncements on this subject no less eloquent than true. The Reichstag also ought to be made use of with a view to influencing the state of public opinion. It is in the highest degree characteristic of our political system that the idea of appealing to the representatives of the people has been treated contemptuously and mockingly by the conservative and patriotic press. For it the German people always consists of a body of subjects who have at the outset no business to ask why a world war must be made, who are commanded to be patriotic,

and who are thus patriots by order. But the Chancellor of the Empire is not so foolish. He knows very well, as a former cavalry officer, that when a horse is about to make its last and supreme effort you must give him his head to some extent. And now that the German nation has to enter upon a world war against France, Russia, and, without doubt, also against England, it is out of the question under such circumstances to apply to it the whip and the spur, according to the receipt of the Junkers. On the contrary, its powerful neck should be stroked in a friendly way, and soothing words must be spoken to it !

And it is not only in the treatment of the German people in general, it is also in the treatment of the working classes in particular—of the Social Democracy—that the method of the Junkers is abandoned. While the conservative press, to the joy of foreigners, insults the strongest party in the Reichstag as being guilty of high treason, on the other hand an effort is made to persuade the Social Democracy that the war, which is to-day imminent, is in reality an old Social Democratic demand. War against Russia, war against blood-stained Tsarism (and, as it has been called in the last few days in a Press only lately an enthusiastic advocate of the knout), war against a Tsarism without conscience—has it not been a Social Democratic demand from the beginning ? Did not Bebel, even, wish to shoulder a rifle when Russia was the enemy ? And did not Lassale, Engels, and Marx in their turn in so many words demand war against Russia ? Then

hurrah ! for the war against Russia, a war essential and vital for Social Democracy !

Such, in fact, is the argument of a part of the middle-class Press, and the most intelligent part, and it proves what great importance is attached to that section of the German nation which stands behind Social Democracy. That is why we no longer hear of "Russian sorrow, German grief," but "Down with Tsarism." It is true that, since in former days the leaders of Social Democracy cried out for a democratic war against Russia, that country has become no longer only the stronghold of reaction, but is now also the centre of revolution. To overthrow Tsarism is now the aim of the Russian people in general, and of the Russian proletariat in particular. And, especially in these last few weeks, there has been a fresh proof of the vigour with which the Russian working class has set itself to the task which history lays upon it. Only yesterday the papers announced that revolution has broken out in thirty-five towns in Russia. Even if that be exaggerated or premature, the Little Father is none the less seated upon an active volcano, and no one knows it better than himself. And all the Nationalist attempts of the true-blue Russians to turn the hatred of the masses away from Tsarism, and to let loose the hounds of reaction against the foreigner, above all, against Germany, have so far failed. The Russian proletariat knows too well that its enemy is not on this side of the frontier, but in its own country. Nothing was more distasteful to the Nationalist agitators, to the

true-blue Russians and Pan-Slavists, than the news of the great demonstrations of the German Social Democracy in favour of peace. How they would have rubbed their hands if it had been the other way about—if they had been able to say to the Russian revolutionary proletariat: “What more do you want? The German Social Democracy is the head and front of the instigators of war against Russia!” And the Little Father at Petrograd would have breathed freely and said: “That is the very news I wanted—now the Russian revolution, my most dangerous foe, has its back broken. The international solidarity of the proletariat is shattered! Now I can unloose the Nationalist hounds—I am saved!”

We recall that before the declaration of war, and during its first weeks, Russia was represented by the German Government, and considered by the whole nation as the aggressor and the responsible party. In this way the Government attempted to render the war popular. The article in the *Vorwärts* tries to foil these tactics. But it puts the paper, on the morning of 3rd August, into pronounced opposition to the declaration which was to be adopted by the Socialist group in the Reichstag a few hours later.

CHAPTER IV

THE SITTING OF THE 4TH AUGUST

THE Imperial Government had announced a sitting of the Reichstag for 4th August, and in its issue of 2nd August, the *Vorwärts* had called together the Socialist deputies, who were to meet the evening before, *i.e.*, 3rd August, for an “important” sitting. Nothing appeared in the paper as to the decisions which were to be arrived at. They had been discussed only in the secret gatherings of the Executive Committee and of the Socialist deputies. So it is very difficult to know what happened.

But, first, before coming to the meeting of the German Parliamentary Socialist group, we must mention a step taken in Paris. On 1st August, the very day when mobilisation was decreed, in Germany as well as in France, Müller, a member of the Executive Committee of the German Socialist party, presented himself to the French Parliamentary Socialist group in session at the Palais Bourbon. His arrival was entirely unexpected. He had come in a motor-car through Belgium, and he had had difficulty, he said, in finding his way. Camille Huysmans, a Belgian, and

secretary of the International Socialist Bureau, accompanied him.

Müller spoke in German, and then his speech was translated. He said that on his departure he was entrusted with a mission, but his journey had been long, and events were following one another so quickly, that he did not know whether his mission still held good. He was to ask their French comrades, in the name of the Executive Committee of the German Socialist party, what they intended to do, for the German Socialists thought it desirable that they should come to an understanding in order to adopt an identical attitude.

The "International" condemns war, which is legitimate only in the case where a nation is attacked. But it is always exceedingly difficult to know who is the aggressor and who is attacked. Generally, the Government which desires war seeks to provoke its adversary so as to make him declare it himself, and, therefore, the mere act of declaration has no great significance. In such a case it is almost useless to attempt to discover where the responsibility lies. The immediate responsibility, even if it can be discovered, is not the most important. The actual responsibility is divided among all States, since, underlying everything, it is the capitalist *régime* itself which is really in fault; it is that which has brought into existence the system of an armed peace and the competition of armaments, and which has aroused Chauvinistic passions. War is only one particularly

odious manifestation of the system. To warlike capitalism the "International" must oppose its peaceful ideal. In face of the anarchy of the interests of the middle classes, resulting in a competition so embittered as to breed world-wide war, the International Socialistic proletariat must affirm its unity. In Germany, said Müller, there could be no question of the Socialists voting war credits. The Parliamentary Socialist group had not yet met to discuss this subject, but on this first point there was no hesitation. There were two currents of opinion: one for refusing the credits, the other for abstaining from the vote. Would it not be possible to agree on both sides of the frontier, in order to show the unity of the "International," to abstain on both sides?¹

The discussion which followed does not concern my present purpose, which is only to show the attitude of the German Parliamentary Socialist group. Still, I think I may give the reply which was made to Müller. I take it from an examination of the matter undertaken by the Belgian Socialists.²

"The delegate of the Executive Committee of the German party urged strongly that a similar line of conduct should be observed on both sides. In reply, it was declared that an agreement on this subject was very desirable; but it was observed,

¹ The above had been already written at the time when Müller's visit was discussed in the French Press. *See Appendix I.*

² *Justice*, official organ of the British Socialist party, 31st December, 1914.

on the other hand, that a similar attitude was possible only if the circumstances were identical in the two countries ; that if France were attacked, despite her evident efforts in favour of peace, the Socialists could not refuse war credits in defence of their country. The German delegate agreed to that, and, in the conversation which followed, declared that the vote for war credits was impossible in Germany. He thought, personally, that abstaining from voting was not enough, and that it was important to record a contrary vote. The very precise information gathered later shows that the German delegate succeeded in returning to Berlin and in giving an account of his mission before the sitting of the Reichstag and the discussion of the Socialist party."

What did the intervention of Müller mean ? His first words, this mission which he was fulfilling, without knowing whether he was still entrusted with it, had not made a good impression upon some of the deputies, who, from that moment, considered his proceedings singular. Indeed, we may well ask, especially after having seen German Socialists accepting diplomatic, and even police, missions from their Government, if Müller may not have been another Südekum. It is clear that the Imperial Government, if it had been able to work upon the French Socialists, would have spared no pains to make them vote against war credits, or merely to ensure their abstention, just as, on the

other hand, it has spared no pains to obtain the vote for the credits from the German Socialists. If it had been able to attain this twofold result, what argument would it not have drawn from it for its own justification?

But suspicion is not enough. Müller has not subsequently been among the number of those Socialists whom we have seen compromising themselves in equivocal missions, or manifesting tendencies particularly Chauvinistic. His mission, singular as it was, had nothing equivocal in it ; the very fact that Camille Huysmans consented to accompany him from Brussels and himself introduce him proves how important and commendable his errand seemed to be in the judgment of the secretary of the International Socialist Bureau. And his words, which contributed most largely to the feeling of uneasiness, were justified : it was true that events were moving quickly, and that his mission might have been modified if he had received it on the first day of his arrival instead of on 30th July. For he must have set out at the earliest at a very early hour on 31st July. His mission, therefore, was given him by the German Socialist party, and by the party only.

But in that case it must be admitted that the Executive Committee of the party, when it entrusted this errand to Müller, was of the opinion that it must vote against the war credits ; otherwise, the infamous manœuvre, which would not have astonished us on the part of the Imperial Government, would have to

be put down to the account of the Executive Committee.

Now this agrees entirely with what we have read. Until 31st July the criticism of the diplomatic negotiations was clear-sighted and bold. The responsibility of the German diplomacy is disclosed. The delegates of the party at the International Socialist Bureau returned that day from Brussels. They related the disappointment caused by Adler's attitude, and the persistence of Jaurès in asking them : “ And what are *you* going to do for peace ? ” At that moment, without doubt, it appeared evident that they would have to vote against the credits. There was not even need of previous deliberation on the point. And then, the situation growing worse during the day, to such a point that there was no real hope left of maintaining peace, the idea arose of communicating with the French comrades, and of coming to an agreement with them, with a view to adopting a common attitude.

Here, however, there is involved an idea which is repugnant to us : the idea of a common attitude when the situations are different. It is particularly repugnant to us now that we know to what an extent the war is the outcome of the aggressive will of Germany, and to what an extent it was the subject of deliberate intention and preparation against France. However bellicose and overbearing Germany's attitude might seem, it must be remembered that she still maintained the appearance of being drawn into a quarrel which was not her own by her alliance with Austria, just as

France was being drawn into it by her alliance with Russia. To-day we see only the one fact that Germany, without even a pretext, has invaded Belgium and France. On 2nd August the situation appeared less simple. It was less simple particularly for the Germans: they saw themselves between France and Russia; they were uneasy as to the peaceable intentions of the Russian Government; their own Government took great pains to persuade them that Russia was the true aggressor and the real enemy. To the Germans the responsibility might still seem to be divided.

And then it must fairly be said: the idea of a common attitude was the product also, in part, of that Socialistic phraseology with which the German Socialists were accustomed to justify their passivity in their own eyes. This great party, so proud of its numbers and of its organisation, and at the same time so resigned to its impotence, took refuge in theoretical formulas and in a kind of fatalism, under the mask of wisdom, which consoled it for its real inaction. The idea of a common attitude corresponded to the theoretical conception of international proletarian solidarity in face of capitalist States, a conception valid only when economic phenomena alone are in question. To a less degree than in Germany this phraseology was current also among many French Socialists. It did not take account of such facts as national sentiment. Accordingly it was very quickly forgotten, in Germany as in France, as soon

as national sentiment became the preponderating factor.

Here we find a first explanation of the vote for the credits by the Socialists in the Reichstag on 4th August. Until about 31st July they had been pure Socialists of the German style, beings in a way unreal and abstract. On 4th August they had again become simple men, and by so much the more carried away by their instinctive passions. But we feel that such an explanation has itself the fault of being too theoretical, in the unfavourable sense of the word, that is to say, not in close touch with life enough.

The Government did not fail to exert its influence. Hermann Wendel, an anti-militarist contributor to the *Vorwärts*, a member of the Reichstag, who had, some months before the war, finished up a speech in the Reichstag with the cry of "Long live France!" took advantage of a journey to Brussels with a convoy of supplies, in the month of September, to go and "shake hands with the comrades of the *Maison du Peuple*." These latter having received him rather coldly, a very lively discussion arose on the subject of the voting of the credits. Wendel declared that he was certain that an understanding existed between France and Belgium to allow French troops who were going to attack Germany to pass through Belgium. The Belgians protested against this fable. Wendel replied that "in the course of a secret interview which took place between the German Socialists and a member of the Government before the sitting of 4th August, the

latter exhibited documents which rendered it impossible for the group to refuse the vote for the war credits.¹

Karl Liebnecht, passing through Brussels in his turn shortly after, was questioned as to this fact. He knew nothing of any secret interview, nor of any documents. He knew of the violation of Belgian neutrality only through the speech of Bethmann-Hollweg.

The secret interview is known only, I believe, through the evidence of Wendel, who was glad to make use of it in order to escape from the reproaches of the Belgian Socialists. Under these conditions especially the proof would be insufficient. But the interview is so probable *a priori* that we may well admit it, and then Wendel's words are interesting for the exact information which they convey. It was an interview with "some German Socialists," so secret that the parliamentary group was not informed of it, any more than they were shown the documents, since Liebnecht knew neither the fact of the interview, nor of the existence of the documents. It would seem that the Government had chosen certain Socialist deputies who inspired it with particular confidence, and that it armed them with information—false naturally, though useful to spread abroad—but at the same time enjoined on them the utmost reticence. These communications could only have taken place *tête-à-tête* and in whispers!

According to information collected in the course of

¹ *Justice*, 31st December, 1914.

a thorough Belgian inquiry among Dutch Socialists, who were able to travel in Germany and to talk with members of the Reichstag, the declaration of the party which was read at the sitting of 4th August must have involved three days' discussion.¹ Now we have seen that the meeting of the group was announced in the *Vorwärts* of 2nd August for the 3rd instant at 11.0 a.m. If, then, it took three days to weigh the terms of the declaration, it must be believed that it was the work, not of the group itself, but of certain of its members, who had begun to draw it up in support of the vote for the credits not later than 1st August, that is, at a moment when it certainly seems that the opinion of the leading Socialist circles must still have been clearly hostile to the vote.

So the scanty indications we have collected would incline us to believe at the same time in certain Government manœuvres and in the intrigues of certain deputies. But perhaps it is better not to rely too much on these indications and not to take any account of them. I add, however, this detail, which shows the prevailing opinion of the group still hostile to the vote for the credits a very short time before the decision in the opposite sense was made:²

“ Two or three days before the meeting (of the Reichstag), comrade Haase had an interview with the Imperial Chancellor, in the course of which he informed him that the Social Democratic

¹ *Justice*, 24th December, 1914.

² *Ibid.*

group would not be able to vote the war credits ; to which Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg replied ' that it was very unfortunate, but that he perfectly understood the difficult position of the Socialist group.' "

Finally the sitting, properly so called, of the group took place on Monday morning, 3rd August. It was faced with a clear situation. The declaration of war with Russia had been known since the evening before ; the occupation of Luxembourg was known ; a declaration of war with France was expected every moment ; and the article which appeared in the morning in the *Vorwärts* showed that it would not be surprised to see England declare war in her turn. The German Socialists, very well informed up to 31st July, were much less well informed after that date, and we have seen the editor of the *Vorwärts* quite overwhelmed ; but they were still capable enough of criticism not to allow themselves to be taken in by false news, as the following note, which appeared on 3rd August, shows :

"ON THE WESTERN FRONTIER.

"As to what is happening on the Franco-German frontier, the news is for the moment somewhat scarce. What trickles through the official filter calls loudly for criticism. But as, at the present moment, the military and war news given by the Press is strictly censored, we must refrain from criticism. The news officially given out is . . ."

Two despatches follow, of which the second is about the famous bombs thrown near Nuremberg by French aviators :

“ This news of the aviators at Nuremberg has had an extraordinary fate. It was communicated to the Press in the above form. Half an hour later there came a warning from Wolff’s bureau forbidding this news to be published ‘ under any circumstances.’ Three quarters of an hour later, the bureau declared that the news might all the same be circulated.”

The German Socialists knew, then, the truth on the subject of the aggression of which many pretended later that Germany had been the victim. They knew the bad faith of their Government.

Müller, giving them an account of his proceedings among the French Socialists, was without doubt obliged to explain to them the true doctrine of their party—a vote for the credits by the Socialists of a country which was attacked ; in any other case, a protest against the war by the rejection of the war credits.

Such was the situation when the discussion began. When men had endeavoured, in the “ International,” to picture this discussion beforehand, they seldom thought it would take so clear a form or that the Socialist duty could be so evident !

The discussion was long and animated. Indeed, it seems that there is no record of so agitated a meeting

of the German Socialist group. Three tendencies showed themselves.

The fraction numerically the weakest comprised fourteen members (out of 111; but we are not told how many were absent). It included Ledebour, Haase, members of the Executive Committee, Leusch (editor of the *Leipziger Volkzeitung*), Liebnecht, Geyer, Stolle, Peirotes (Alsatian), deputy for Colmar, and Emmel (German), member for Mulhausen. But the latter afterwards became an agent of German propaganda. We know that Georges Weill, member for Metz, Alsatian by birth, was then in France, and that he joined the French Army immediately after the declaration of war. Bochle (German), member for Strasbourg Town, was of the majority, and Fuchs (German), member for Strasbourg country district, abstained.

Another section, and a numerous one, considered the war as capitalist in essence, but did not think that the Socialists had the right to separate themselves from the bulk of the nation, the development and very existence of which were threatened, in the case of a defeat, by Russian absolutism.

The last section, very nearly equal in number to the preceding, was led by Dr. David, member for Mayence. It held that, the country being at war, there could be no more parties, and that the Socialists must unite their action unreservedly with that of the Government.

So this last group declared without circumlocution

that they should not consider themselves as Socialists as long as the war lasted. Following their example, the preceding group declined to inquire whether Germany had employed an aggressive or a pacific policy, and, considering only the fact of war, which entailed the necessity of a great national effort, they judged that they could not weaken German unity, however much they might deplore the war as a manifestation of the capitalist system. However different were the motives of these two sections, they both agreed in supporting a vote for the credits, and they joined together to form an overwhelming majority. The following¹ declaration was passed to be read in the name of the party at the sitting of the Reichstag next day:

“ The hour of destiny is about to strike. The consequences of Imperialist policy have spread over Europe like a river which has burst its boundaries, and among these results are an era of rivalry in armaments and an increase of discord among the nations. The responsibility for this falls upon the supporters of that policy; for ourselves, we repudiate it. Social Democracy has fought with all its strength against that fatal development, and up to the last moment, by powerful appeals in every country, and, above all, in close accord with our French brothers, it has worked for the maintenance of peace. But its efforts have been made in vain.

¹ *Justice*, 31st December, 1914.

“ To-day we are face to face with the pitiless reality of war. The horrors of hostile invasion menace us. It is not for or against war that we have to decide to-day, but as to the measures necessary for the defence of the country.

“ We must now think of the millions of our comrades amongst the people who have become entangled in a machinery over which they have no control. It is they who will be most sorely stricken by the ravages of war. Our ardent sympathies go with our brothers called to the colours, without any distinction of party.

“ We think, too, of the mothers, who must give up their sons, of the wives and children deprived of their support, menaced with the horrors of famine. Soon the combatants, wounded and maimed, will come to join them by tens of thousands. We conceive it to be our binding duty to aid them all, to soften their hard lot, to relieve the immense distress.

“ For our people and their prospect of liberty in the future, in the event of the victory of Russian despotism, stained with the blood of the best amongst its own people, much, if not all, is at stake. It is our business to meet that danger, to safeguard the ‘Kultur’ and the independence of our own country. In doing that we accomplish what we have always declared to be our duty; we do not abandon the fatherland in the hour of danger. Thus we feel ourselves in accord

with the 'International,' which has always recognised the right of every people to defend its national independence, just as in accord with it we condemn every war of conquest.

" We desire that an end shall be put to the war so soon as the object of self-preservation shall have been attained, and the opposing sides shall be well-disposed for peace by means of the establishment of a peace which makes friendship with neighbouring peoples possible. We desire that result, not only in the interest of international solidarity, for which we have always striven, but also in the interest of the German people.

" We hope that this frightful schooling in the sufferings of war will awaken such a horror of war in the conscience of thousands that they will be won over to the ideal of Socialism and of peace among all peoples.

" In virtue of these considerations we shall support the vote of credits that are asked for."

Such is the declaration which the Socialist group of the Reichstag brought itself to make. They well knew that the war was not the result of Russian or French aggression, and did not dare to pretend that for Germany it was a defensive war. But, by means of a shift, the principle of defence was brought in: we must defend ourselves, they said, against a possible victory of Russian despotism. And that right of defence against those whom in fact one is attacking

is directly countenanced by the authority of the decisions of the "International"! The group condemns the principle of a war of conquest, and makes believe that the issue is one of "self-preservation," without daring to affirm it in terms, because it well knows that the contrary is the fact. It invokes for another day, that is, the day of peace, the interests of the German people, which in the actual present it surrenders. What avails it to condemn Imperialist policy without naming the country in which it has run riot to the point of letting loose the furies of war? Of what value is the concord with our "French brothers," at the very moment that they are severing themselves from them, and when it cannot be doubted that the principal military effort of Germany will be directed against their country? And how does it lie in the mouth of that group to boast of having striven with all its might against the war, when at the self-same moment it declines to make the only vigorous protest that one had hoped to hear from it? This ambiguous pronouncement of theirs is the declaration of the bankruptcy of the leaders of German Social Democracy.

True, there was a minority. At its request the Swedish Socialist journal, *Socialdemokraten*, of the 16th October, published an article by Hjalmar Branting, who states that the views of that minority can be summarised as follows :

"Perhaps it is well, at the outset, in order to prevent all misunderstanding, to lay stress upon

what is self-evident—namely, that not for a moment has the minority called in question the right and duty of national defence.

“Upon that point, then, there has been complete agreement. On the other hand, the minority were of opinion that it was the duty of the Socialist group of the Reichstag to disclaim in the most categoric terms all responsibility for this war, which has been fomented by, and is the necessary sequel of, a policy that we have always opposed, a policy in which the governing classes of Germany are in a large measure accomplices, a policy which, regarded as a whole, is the outcome of the capitalist-Imperialist development against which we contend.

“Only the most categoric form of protest could have adequately met the circumstances of the case. But, in voting the war credits, the Social Democratic group of the German Reichstag, in spite of all the reservations contained in its declaration, has assumed its share of the responsibility.

“That mistake was so much the greater, because in the German official statement the ‘complete record’ of the events which directly resulted in the war was in reality *incomplete*, and because the question for Germany has been essentially a question of a war of anticipation, a *preventive war*, and indeed perhaps more than this, a war of conquest, a capitalist war of expansion.

“It is superfluous to develop here the idea

that *any annexation* would mean a continuing danger to peace in the future, and absolutely no guarantee of actual peace.

“ But, even from a purely national point of view, the decision of the Socialist group of the Reichstag implies a fatal mistake. It is only in appearance that the decision has strengthened the military situation of Germany. At a blow all the barriers have been destroyed which, abroad, still stood firm against war, and against the association of the masses of the people, whether at home or abroad, with the principle of war.

“ If the group of the Reichstag had taken another attitude, the war could not have become so popular as it is to-day. The disposition of men’s minds would have been different in France, in Russia, and in England. Sembat and Guesde would not have joined the French Government ; the English Trade Unions would not have encouraged by their approval voluntary enlistments. In short, one sees that this demeanour on the part of the German democracy was bound indirectly to strengthen very appreciably the enemies of Germany.

“ The only hope we can nourish to-day is that, even while the war is going on, we may succeed in bringing into play such international influences as can be exerted against the war, and weaken the desire to continue it. It is, then, in this direction that every effort must be exerted, in the interest

of each nation in particular, and of the whole of humanity."

In the result we find there is a fundamental agreement between the majority and the minority as to the unqualified and absolute right and duty of national defence, and as to the Imperialist origin of the war. The minority adds that, as to this Imperialist policy, Germany is an accomplice in it "in a large measure"—but that is not saying much. But the immediate causes of the war lead one to think that it has been for Germany a war of anticipation, "a preventive war, that is to say, an aggressive war, and, further, a war of conquest, and, therefore, full of danger for the future. And here we are confronted with the fundamental question. The German Government attacks: this is a responsibility in which the Socialists can take no share. If the German Socialist party had taken up that position, it would have had a good starting point from which usefully to discuss international policy, and its own Government.

The conclusion of the article is curious. It reproaches the majority of the Socialist group for having neglected the national interest, but not the interest of the people in the matter of peace, nor their interest (important for the future) in having their love of peace at least insisted on. No, what the majority has not perceived is that it was to the interest of Germany, with a view to the very success itself of the war, that the Socialist party should make a demonstration in favour of peace.

One sees what difficulty the minority must have in understanding the Socialists in the ranks of the Allies, when they say that the military defeat of the German Empire is necessary for the democratic and truly national future of Germany herself.

It was an absolute rule with the Socialist group that in public it must vote unanimously as had been decided by the majority at a private meeting. At the utmost a member was allowed to abstain from voting. Therefore the declaration that we have read above is to be treated as the declaration of the whole group. Haase was delegated to read it at the public meeting. But he had been one of the minority. Kautsky, although he was not a deputy, apparently attended the session, for it was he who urged upon Haase that he should carry the surrender of his personal opinion even further than the rule demanded, and read the declaration at the sitting. He agreed so to do.

The meeting of the Reichstag at which it was read, had been carefully arranged under the direction of the Government and the Committee of the Reichstag. It had been agreed with the political groups that no one should speak besides the Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, and the President Kaempf, who would speak in the name of the whole of the Chamber. One exception only was allowed in favour of the Socialist group, whose declaration would be read: but it was to be previously communicated to the president, so that the text of it should be settled "*ne varietur*" before the sitting, come what might.

It seems that the Socialists learned the fact of the violation of the neutrality of Belgium only from the speech of the Chancellor. They gathered from it the admission that nothing justified that act. They heard the recital of the almost incredible invasions of the frontier by the French, put forward as the sole ground for the declaration of war against France. Some deputies were perhaps disturbed in mind. But the group had come to their decision, and the declaration marked *ne varietur* had been placed in the hands of the President of the Reichstag. Liebnecht would have much liked to speak, but it had been agreed that no one should do so.

The social democracy had no longer power to disentangle itself. In the morning a journal, the *Tagliche Rundschau*, had announced in big type that the President Kaempf would close the sitting, or rather the ceremony, by a *Hoch* for the Emperor, the Empire, and the people, and that the Social Democratic party itself would join in the cheering. The *Vorwärts* of 2nd August prefaced the text of the speeches with a report of the sitting, where they were summarised without any comment. It decided to accept the statements of the Chancellor outright. His concluding words are thus summarised, and followed by a characteristic observation :

“‘ In this war, which is forced upon it, the Government knows that it is in accord with the united German people.’ These words, which were

made possible by the resolution of the Socialist group to vote for the war credits, excited a tremendous enthusiasm. Every one stood up, clapped his hands, and shouted 'bravo.' "

The author of the article seems proud of his party, and he is no doubt the inventor of the expression "war forced upon us," *aufgezwungen*, which well renders the effect of the speech of Bethmann-Hollweg, but is not actually used in it. Further on the journal states that the unanimous vote, authorising the whole of the legislative measures proposed, was likewise universally applauded, except only that the Social Democrats abstained from joining in the demonstration.

"President Kaempf again spoke, and the Chamber stood up to listen to him. At the end of his speech he called for a *Hoch* for the Emperor, for the people and the fatherland, which the Social Democrats also listened to standing up. This was the first *Hoch* raised in honour of the people and the fatherland in that Chamber, upon the walls of which it was proposed to place the inscription: 'To the German people.' The inscription is still lacking."

This supplement to the traditional *Hoch* in favour of the Emperor was all that the Socialist group of the Reichstag secured to make less disagreeable its complete *volte-face* in the ceremonial organised by Bethmann-Hollweg.

Thus the German Social Democrats resigned their functions. They nullified themselves. They might well have declined all responsibility in the war, but instead they rallied round the Imperial Government. They publicly proclaimed their impotence and their submission. Their surrender was even more complete than they themselves thought. Of the three sections, into which the German Socialist parliamentary group was split, when it was deliberating as to the attitude to be taken up, it was the extreme section which triumphed, the section composed of those who desired that there should no longer be any parties. These latter were quite sure that they could not be repudiated when they put themselves at the disposal of the Government for its secret intrigues amongst the neutral nations. All power of opposition was broken in the social democracy, thenceforth tied to the Empire, and compelled to submit to the domination of the deputies, whose character of Socialists would henceforth only be of service in rendering their special missions easier to carry out.

On the other hand, the dissentients, whose desire had been to vote against the credits, could only bow, as Haase did, before the decision of a huge majority, or hold their peace. That is what they have been doing for eight weeks.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

UP to 31st July the German Socialist deputies were kept well informed ; that is to say, they were able thoroughly to follow the diplomatic negotiations concerning the substance of the quarrel ; for, from and after that date, it was only a question of mobilisation. They fully understood the meaning and the scope of these negotiations. Very soon their journal saw that a European war was developing, and the responsibility of Austria became apparent to it. It hoped at first that Germany would intervene in favour of peace, and pointed out what she had to do. By degrees, the journal recognised that German diplomacy was acting in a directly opposite sense. It then exposed the responsibility of Germany, in terms less energetic than those applied to Austria, but quite as definite. During all that time the *Vorwärts* had affirmed the pacific intentions of England and France, and applauded the diplomatic initiative of England, and, in spite of its extreme distrust of the Russian Government, it had declared that nothing could be laid to its charge, and that even its mobilisation, having regard to the delay in carrying it out, could not justify the display of

irritable apprehensions in the subsequent diplomatic discussions with that Government.

On the 31st July comes the declaration of a state of danger in view of impending war. It was clear that mobilisation was about to follow immediately, and that for Germany mobilisation means war. It is war then from that moment. Suddenly the journal of the party alters its tone. It recalls again such of the arguments of the preceding days as appeared to it to be of a kind to suggest a slight hope of peace, and again it points out the right course to follow. It is no longer capable of a spirit of criticism. It no longer seems to cast doubt upon the Kaiser's goodwill towards peace, and quotes his words. Nothing, however, has been able to qualify its judgment as to the fundamental rights of the matter, and it has no reproach to throw against any of the future enemies.

Franz Mehring, the historian of German Socialism, who ranges himself on the side of the minority, will later on give the obvious explanation: the leaders lost their heads.

All the same, after the attitude taken up by Haase at the International Socialist headquarters, and by Müller at the meeting of the French Socialist group, it needed more than the exciting influence of war to make the majority of the delegates vote for the credits. The communications that passed between Bethmann-Hollweg and Haase, after the return of the latter from Brussels, that is, between the 31st July and the 2nd August, show that at that moment the refusal of

the credits seemed certain. The Government intervened. What, forsooth, were the pretended acts of aggression against Germany that were put forward by a member of the Government at a secret interview with some of the Socialist deputies, and what were the intrigues of those deputies? We are in the dark. But the communications at that moment were all semi-official. The disclosure which seems to have produced the greatest effect apparently related to the telegrams exchanged between the Tsar and the Kaiser. This has been indicated from two sources, first in a note which appeared in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, where a naturally one-sided story of the purport of the telegrams is given, with several extracts not set out in inverted commas, then by the text itself of the telegrams, published in the White Book. The latter was issued on 4th August, and it contains nine of the telegrams exchanged between the two Emperors. It is remarkable that the *Vorwärts* omitted the last two. In one of these Nicholas II. affirms his desire to negotiate, and that even after the despatch of the ultimatum, which William II., in the other omitted telegram, flatly and harshly repeats. That suppression, without doubt, was intentional. Upon the evening of the 4th August it became necessary to justify the attitude of the Party. The publication of the seven telegrams is followed by this summary comment:

“ This exchange of telegrams between the Tsar and William II. reflects in substance (just as do

also the other documents published in the White Book) points of view on either side, which, in the existing state of things, are quite incapable of being reconciled."

The German Government played its cards very astutely in dealing with those telegrams. It suppressed the telegram of the Tsar, in which, as we have since learnt, he proposed an appeal to the Hague Tribunal. It suppressed at least one other of the telegrams. In great detail it set forth its interpretation of the documents, without submitting them to public examination, and, lastly, it gave the text of the nine selected telegrams, divided into three groups, in the White Book, issued at the last moment, at a time when the deputies could not give them a careful study. It has often been asserted that German diplomacy has gratuitously added one blunder to another through a lack of psychological insight. We must admit, however, that the Government has been astute enough at least in tricking the German people, and especially the Socialist party. And was not that in reality its main concern? Read again the telegrams of William to Nicholas: the desire to appear pacific is plain enough in them. William, however, could have no hope of deluding the Tsar, who knew how much to believe. It is then for the consumption of the German people that they have been written. They have played no part in the actual negotiations: they are dished up as an appetiser for the German people.

But the Socialist deputies, even if they had not so well followed the diplomatic game up to the 31st July, ought not to have let themselves be caught by such ordinary trickery. It was not to be expected that they should have confidence in their Government after having for forty-four years upbraided their diplomats with the fraud of the Ems telegram. The mass of the people might well be deceived, and give way to a Chauvinist impulse, but not so the deputies. It was only possible to deceive them because they wished to be deceived. In reality their Government gave them a pretext for coming over to their side, a pretext quite good enough if they were not over-scrupulous. And the readiness with which they accepted it shows that their adhesion was assured in advance. Doubtless the majority amongst them did not suspect it, but the Imperial Government knew them better than they knew themselves.

To refuse the war votes was to take up a revolutionary attitude, and for a party in opposition they had become as little revolutionary as can be imagined. They were not even able to see the advantage of a simple demonstration, though it could have had no practical result, nor of a declaration reserving all rights of action in the future. They only saw the interest of the moment. The war, whatever their vote might be, was a settled issue. They thought that from that time there was nothing else but to defend their country, for every war, even if aggressive in its origin, becomes defensive the moment it is

actually commenced. And, above all, they thought that they must by their vote save the organisation of the party and of their associated unions. For it seems very clear that it was the anxiety to save their organisation that furnished one of their convincing arguments. The controllers of the workmen's unions exercised a great influence upon their decision.

So completely did they renounce all idea of action that they contented themselves with making vague allegations against Imperialist policy, and were not capable of showing any surprise when, at the formal sitting of the Chamber, they learnt of the violation of Belgian neutrality for which no justification *at that time* was claimed. Their surrender was as absolute as the unscrupulousness of Bethmann-Hollweg. If they had protested, at least at that time, and at least upon that point, who can say that the system of terrorism and devastation would not have been abandoned, or at least modified?

It has been said that they would have had need of a courage amounting to heroism to have condemned the war in the face of the Reichstag. It is certain that Karl Liebnecht gave good proof of courage on the 2nd December, because on that day he knew that he would stand alone. But if on the 4th August the group had decided to oppose the war credits, can it be pretended that it would have been a matter of such difficulty to assert the consolidated opinion of the largest party in the Reichstag and in the country?

In 1870 and 1871 Bebel and Liebnecht had need of a noble courage; in 1820 there was the same need, although the record of it is quite forgotten. But in 1914 the vote against the credits was easy, no risk could attend it. The Government could never have vented its rage against deputies more than a hundred in number. They represented too many electors and too many soldiers for that.

All the more easy was it to move the rejection of the credits because the Socialist deputies had not even any need, in making their declaration, to speak as Socialists. They had only to assert the true national interest of Germany, and to speak as patriots. They could have indicted German Imperialism, and set off against the idea of Pan-Germanism the normal evolution of German nationality on friendly terms with other nationalities, since that was in conformity with the accepted principles of the Socialist party. They could have called attention to the formidable combination ready to put a spoke into the menacing wheel of a German hegemony, since the hemming-in of Germany was an apprehension of old standing, and their journal had foreseen the probable intervention of England (*see* the article of 30th August, "Against Tsarism"). They could have repeated what they had written—that France and England are pacifist, that Russia has shown herself conciliatory, that her mobilisation, inasmuch as it cannot be effected quickly, is not disquieting, and that victory is always uncertain. They could have asserted that even

victory itself is unwholesome and dangerous for the nation that wins it.

Being cognisant of the mentality and the views of their military writers, they could have protested in advance against a war which would be conducted on such principles as those writers advocated.

It is likely that they would not have been permitted to read a declaration in that sense. In that event they could have cast a silent vote against the credits, and their reasons could have been given to the public in some journal in German Switzerland. The Government would have been driven to acknowledge that it was acting in opposition to the will of the people. They would have been ready, on the first opportunity, to rouse the people against the Imperial system, as being responsible for the immense national distress, and as having failed even to arrange for the rapid victory which it had promised. They would doubtless have helped to diminish the horrors of the war, and to keep alive the distinction which was everywhere appreciated in France, at the outset, between the German people and militarist Germany. They would have made it clear that there existed in their own country a pacifist spirit, which would have had a tranquillising influence on the world, and thus have made it an almost simple matter to establish an honourable and solid peace—and that at an earlier hour.

It is all this, all the possibilities of a happy future, that they have destroyed by their deplorable attitude,

possibilities which concern above all, we must observe, their own country. They were, alas ! unconsciously, too Pan-Germanist, and by the same token, bad patriots.

For the ill-starred decision of the 3rd August was only the definitive assertion of tendencies, numerous symptoms of which had been observable. They had not altogether escaped the contagion of Imperialism. Already they had voted the necessary supplies for the most recent and formidable increase of the German military forces. If they were traitors at once to their country and to Socialism, it is because they had long since, gradually and imperceptibly, become such. The vital principle which formerly animated them was dropping out of their socialist system. The party itself recognised the half-satisfied, half-resigned passiveness of its members and of the unions. The democratic spirit was disappearing from amongst them, and they were allying themselves closer and closer with the Empire : because in the first place the idea of organisation, which dominated alike the middle classes and the party, came to be interpreted by one and the other in almost identical fashion, so that the Socialists accepted, with a certain degree of docility, the bureaucratic hierarchy ; and in the second place, the idea of Germanic supremacy, though it contained for them no bellicose element, nevertheless was beginning to obsess the imagination of an increasing number of them.

But the analysis of the exact process, by which the present psychological and mental disorder which is

raging in Germany has contaminated the Socialists also, would necessitate a separate inquiry. Let us take that fact for granted, and pass on to consider the consequences. The leaders of the German Social Democracy have betrayed the cause of International Socialism. Their verbal reservations do not excuse them from sharing with the Imperial Government the responsibility for a war of aggression. They have not taken the initiative, but they have concurred in the act. They likewise concurred in the violation of Belgian neutrality, and subsequently even upheld the propriety of that action.¹ Indirectly they share the responsibility for the German atrocities, which they condemn in principle, while they refuse to take note of them, or even find excuses for them. A study of the causes of the war has certainly opened the eyes of some of them a little. But the governing element of the party, and the great majority of the Parliamentary group, have only stiffened themselves in the attitude taken up. After fresh deliberation they have insisted that they were right. When it came to be known that Südekum, after his already suspicious journeys to Italy and Sweden, had discharged, unknown to his party, on behalf of the Government, a mission to Roumania, he was not censured. It was against

¹ See the article by Wilhelm Jansson, delegate of the Committee of control of the German section, addressed to the Swedish Socialists, in the *Tiden* (August to September, 1914). "The German Social Democracy, as a party, has not identified itself (*sic*) with that violation of neutrality. But a great number of them admit the necessity of it from the point of view of military strategy."

Karl Liebnecht that a vote of censure was passed. But that there were, in the German Socialist Parliamentary group, one or several Südekums, in itself was a circumstance of no great importance. It had value only as a symptom. The serious point was that the party has not categorically repudiated any identification with his action. Quite the contrary; the party has become, more and more, a party of "Imperialist Socialists." Kantsky, the great theorist, was very slow to resist this tendency. Scheidemann, whom the Parliamentary group had formerly raised to the Vice-Presidency of the Chamber, swam with the stream, in company with nearly all the best known leaders. It appears, and indeed it is true, that the minority is growing, and little by little asserting itself more strongly, but it still remains an insignificant minority, and Lebedour, a member of that minority from the beginning, has felt himself bound to leave the Committee of Control. There was no other course open to him. The line to be followed by the party was fixed on the 4th August. It was bound by its fatal vote. It could in future only carry out in detail the consequences of its treachery, and thereby aggravate it. It was in bondage, and, as a result, could get nothing in exchange for its vote, not even electoral reform in Prussia, for it no longer represented a force, and the Government had no longer need to stand on ceremony with it. The political leaders of German Social Democracy have not only surrendered their own principles, and the ideals of right and justice, no

less than the cause of Internationalism, and the interests of the German people; they have gone so far as actively to oppose the most vital interests of the German Socialist party. For such moral aberration I can see only one explanation: they believed, with an absolute confidence, in the victory of Germany. Incapable¹ of contemplating any other hypothesis, they rushed to the assistance of the conquering side, so as not to be treated as enemies by a triumphal Empire: their anxiety "to save the unions" had no other meaning.

They hoped, under the protecting shadows of superior power, to be allowed the opportunity of gathering the rewards of their docility. Abasing themselves in Germany, they looked forward, at the same time, to dominating even more decisively the International.

In spite of their genuine hatred of war, they were proud of the victory which they anticipated, and also of the benefits which the sapient German Imperial Administration was going to spread over the world. Wendel, the Reichstag deputy, ingenuously held out to the Belgians the prospect of being blessed with the same social reforms which Germany had long enjoyed.²

The leaders of the German Social Democracy had

¹ (*Note at the foot of page 82 in the French text*):

"Their faith in the success of the war seems to be a circumstance which admits of no doubt, in spite of the argument which in their Manifesto they drew from the uncertainty of the issues of war in general. That faith is all the more remarkable, because, as we have seen, they foresaw the neutrality of Italy, and the probable intervention of England."

² *Justice*, 31st December, 1914.

become, unconsciously, too Pan-Germanist, and too strong admirers of their Empire to suspect that the victory of Germany *would still further delay* the slow evolution of a normal German nationality, that *it would arrest* all democratic impetus, in Germany and elsewhere, for a long period, and that the era of huge armaments, and Imperial extravagance, in which we live, would enter upon a new epoch, still more oppressive than the past. Under those conditions, *what* would become of their party and the International? The answer, painful as it may be for Socialists to formulate, forces itself upon us :

It is impossible to treat German Social Democracy, as presented to-day by the majority of its leaders, as a true Socialist party.

We must understand the influence of German Social Democracy in the International, the authority of its delegates over its conferences, the actual supremacy which it used to exercise, limited only by the confidence and respect inspired by Jaurès, to appreciate the gravity of this. It is almost as though the sanctuary of Socialism were being desecrated. False gods have ever offered a prolonged resistance before their idols have been shattered, and therefore we must be prepared for hesitation on the part of the International to sit in judgment. But what would be the International of the future if, from traditional deference to German Social Democracy, it dared not pronounce a just and necessary verdict against it? Of course, I know well, at a congress it is possible to put

discretion foremost, the different parties sitting each upon its own benches, and voting, it may be, all together, and then breaking apart again without arriving at any real understanding with one another. What influence would an International of that sort have, purely formal, without cordiality, without mutual confidence, without the possibility of any sound co-operation between several of the most important groups? There would be, on the one side, the clique of the Germanists, on the other, those who condemn them, a section numerous, not only amongst the Allies, but also amongst the Neutrals; and between the two groups we should see all those who aim at a balance of opinions, and try to fit themselves in so as to secure it. The question of the vote of the war credits in the Reichstag would remain a line of cleavage, apparent even in discussions concerning matters entirely connected with it; it would disturb the very existence of national parties, and make it impossible for the International to perform its functions. And it would not be a question of a temporary coolness, for the sense of irritation against the leaders of the German Social Democracy will not so soon abate: it is only just beginning to make itself felt, and it will continue to increase.

Unless the German Social Democracy resumes its sanity, and works out its own salvation. In that alone would be found a happy solution. If Mehring, Lebedour, Haase, Clara Zetkin, and all the most highly regarded members of the German Social Demo-

cratic party, the people who understand that a monumental mistake was made on the 4th August—not to speak of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, whom we are too much used to see keeping to themselves—succeeded in bringing over to their side some of the waverers, such as Bernstein and, as they assuredly would, very many more; if further, by some means or another they managed to bring about an internal reformation of the German Socialist party, sufficiently radical to mean a genuine change of front, there is no doubt but that, to the joyful satisfaction of everybody, the transformed German section would be welcomed with open arms by the International convened at the earliest occasion possible for the purpose.

But it would not be enough that the German party should censure, or even expel, Südekum, and some other members who were most deeply implicated in those diplomatic or police office intrigues, of which doubtless only a part has yet been disclosed.

These are not simple acts of individual initiative, the responsibility for which the party can throw back upon their authors. Those acts are the logical sequence of the attitude adopted on the 4th August, and it is not enough to sacrifice a few scapegoats. It is the German Socialist party which must be reformed, which must assume another character. But, it will be said, by such treatment that great party will find itself materially reduced. So much the better, since its greatness was but a deceptive picture.

This is a great deal to ask. Will certain sections

of the International, or even the International as a body, intermeddle with the private concerns of one section, and impose upon it such a drastic reform? There are no precedents. We have often seen certain sections discreetly called to order—to good Socialist discipline—by decrees of Congress; but there has been no instance of official censure, or wholesale expulsion. Neither has there been any instance so outrageous of breach of faith. It is not a question of telling the German Socialist party what it ought to do. It is its own business to work out its internal reformation. The welcome given to that reformation will be in accordance with its nature. One thing is certain, namely, that if that party is to present itself to the first Congress to be held after the war, wearing the same aspect as it wears to-day, and if the International is weak enough to rub the sponge over the past, and to believe that it will still be able to act with effect, to develop and extend its influence, then it will deal a fatal blow to its very existence, and it will become no more than a mere name, a thing without life, or showing itself to be alive only by the vitality of its dissensions. If the Socialists wish to keep alive the organs of the international life of their party, they must forswear all the conventional shibboleths, by which in circumstances of embarrassment they are accustomed to make the capitalist system responsible for everything. Granted that it is obvious the mistakes themselves, made by the Socialists in their opposition to the system they are fighting, can be

explained by the conditions of the battle which that system imposes, and that the system consequently must be held essentially responsible for those conditions. Granted that the same thing is true, even in a case of treachery to the Socialist cause, is that a ground for condoning it? Assuredly not, for that would be but a further treachery. German Social Democracy, if it were to seek to foist itself upon us as it stands to-day, would have to be repudiated. That would be the only way of saving the International —unless we wish the war to be fatal to its existence, as the war of 1870-71 was fatal to the old International!

At the Socialist Congress of Copenhagen (1910) a motion of the Dutch delegates, Van Kol and Vliegen, was passed, to the effect that "the International Bureau before each International Congress shall lodge a report giving a review of the steps taken by each national party to carry out the resolutions passed by the International Congresses." This procedure opens a way to the resumption of international relations, and the discussion of the report thus provided for would be enough to occupy fully the sittings of a Congress. The Conference of the Neutrals at Copenhagen, that of the Allies in London, did not open their discussion as they should have done in the way which had been agreed upon.

And of what kind can the report of the International Bureau be? Clearly it must be based upon the reports of the several national parties concerned.

In its own special report the German party—and in like manner the Austrian—will have to be invited to enter its defence. That will give it an opportunity to analyse its own course of action. Is it capable of doing that?

Throughout the whole of this article, only the Socialist deputies of the Reichstag have been under discussion, and not the general body of German Socialists. But that the latter have been also carried away by a wave of Jingoism is obviously beyond doubt; that their deplorable inertia has encouraged the Government, is all too clear; still there can be no question of making them responsible for the vote of the war credits, and they evidently believed that Germany was the attacked party, while the deputies knew well that it was she herself that was the aggressor. The general body is still in the dark. It has no more than a suspicion that it has been deceived by the Government, and by its own leaders. It is from the mass, and not from the insignificant minority of the deputies who wished to vote against the war credits, that we can hope for an awakening, an internal reformation of the German Socialist party, that is, if the historian of German Socialism, Franz Mehring, speaks truly in what he has written for the New Year's number of the *Labour Leader*:

“ The invidious light in which the German Social Democracy presents itself to its brother partners is, in spite of everything, not altogether

justified by facts. What is going on to-day is analogous to what happened at the time of the exceptional laws, when the leaders, on this occasion, lost their heads, but the mass quickly rallied to the war-cry: '*With* the leaders if they go forward, *without* the leaders if they do nothing, *against* the leaders if they resist the movement.' "

It is all the more necessary that the International should give its support to the mass of German Socialism.

If the Socialists of the neutral countries, and of the allied countries, even while the war was going on, had dared to analyse the facts with an open and honest mind, there is no doubt but that they would have been driven to pronounce with no uncertain sound their reprobation of the treachery of the leaders of German Social Democracy. That authoritative action would have done more than secure the future of the International. It would have exercised the most beneficial influence upon the course of the war itself. Nothing would have contributed more to the enlightenment of the whole body of the German party. And if the regenerated party recovered the energy by which it was formerly inspired, who knows if it would not soon have an opportunity to stimulate a revolutionary movement in Germany already in convulsion. Then it would have been possible to talk of peace, for a reliable peace would have been possible.

But without doubt Mehring uses the altitude of the mass of German Socialists as a diary both for his own

hopes and for ours. In any case after a war engineered in this way, it would not be wise to rely implicitly upon that support. Doubtless, too, the leaders of the International go on negotiating and parleying group with group and cheat themselves into thinking that they are doing something, instead of examining the position, reflecting upon it, and then coming to a determination.

However, perhaps the time will come !

A P P E N D I C E S.

APPENDIX I

WITH reference to the visit of Müller (page 75), there has been published, with the signatures of Pierre Renaudel, in *L'Humanité* of the 26th February, 1915, certain statements in reply to an account which M. Südekum had compiled about it, coloured by his own views. That information was given in the course of an article dealing with the conference of the allied Socialists in London. I produce here only that part of the article which relates to the visit of Müller. Some days later, on the 4th March, *L'Humanité* published the letter that follows this extract.

THE VOICE OF LONDON

* * * * *

But there is another point of the first importance. M. Südekum has hawked about in Italy—I find the account in *Il Secolo* of the 9th February—an inaccurate account of a visit paid by Müller, member of the German *Parteivorstand*, to the Socialist Parliamentary Group.

This visit took place the very next day after the death of Jaurès (of which Müller learnt upon his arrival in Paris).

First false point:—Müller did not come at all to attend the funeral of our friend, but wholly because the *Parteivorstand* was disquieted by the gravity of the position. Südekum alleges that Müller was received with cordiality. I suppose he would admit that

himself. At the critical moment at which we had arrived, his action could not fail to appeal to our feelings by the assertion of international solidarity which it emphasised. Müller assured us that the Social Democrats, at the voting of the war credits in the Reichstag, would vote *against*, or would abstain from voting at all, if the French Socialists on their side also would abstain. There were some amongst us who took occasion to impress upon Müller that, if France were attacked, or invaded, not one single Socialist would shrink from voting for the war credits. Müller declared that the question of who was the aggressor was one about which different theories might be held, and one very difficult to settle. But what was beyond dispute was the question of principle: not to vote the military supplies necessary for the war; and he re-affirmed that only two currents of opinion had shown themselves among German Socialists; they would vote *against*, or, at the most, they would abstain. Südekum misled the Italian Socialists by telling them anything else. At any rate, no one can say that the German Socialists were misled by us. With loyal frankness we told them that any act of aggression would at once determine our attitude. The rest is known; war was declared, Belgium and France were invaded; the French Socialists were faithful to their duty to the nation, after having done everything to avoid the disaster, and, being confident that their Government had endeavoured, right up to the last, to find a peaceful solution.

A CONFIRMATION

I have received from citizen Henri de Man the letter which appears below, a letter which confirms all that I communicated several days ago about the visit paid by Müller, member of the *Parteivorstand*, to the French Socialist Party before the declaration of war. The testimony of Henri de Man is specially

valuable. Our comrade was attached, at Brussels, to the secretarial staff of the International Socialist Bureau. It was in virtue of that position, and in order to act as interpreter, that he accompanied Müller. Our friend de Man, at this moment, is a sub-lieutenant in the Belgian army.

(Initialled) P. R.

My Dear Renaudel,—I see from *L'Humanité* of the day before yesterday, that an incorrect account of the visit of Müller to Paris, on the 1st August, hawked about by Südekum in Italy, has obliged you to put the matter in its true light.

Unluckily I had to destroy the notes which I had made to help me to discharge my duty as interpreter at the two interviews which Müller had with the Socialist Parliamentary Group. But before my recollection becomes less clear, I am anxious, by adding some details, to corroborate your account of Müller's visit. You will make any use you think desirable of my letter.

Müller, in fact, had been sent by the *Parteivorstand*, not to attend the funeral of Jaurès, of whose death he heard only while on his journey (at Brussels), but for the purpose of "exchanging information," to use his own expression.

The *Parteivorstand* was anxious to inform the French comrades of the matters and of feeling in Germany, and wished at the same time to ascertain the attitude likely to be taken up by the French Socialist Group when the war credits would be put to the vote. It desired to get that information in view of the sitting of the Reichstag announced for the following Tuesday, which was to be preceded by a sitting of the Social Democratic Group, at which the latter would determine its attitude with regard to the war credits.

Müller was received, not "in an unprecedented manner," as Südekum states, but with an extreme cordiality, which the tragic circumstances of the moment made specially touching.

So soon as the sitting had commenced, Müller defined the significance of his mission, and of the pronouncements that he was about to make by saying that, since neither the *Parteivorstand*, nor the Social Democratic Parliamentary Group had yet discussed the question of their attitude with regard to the war credits, and since, moreover, the situation might yet be modified before they had to do so, he proposed to limit himself to setting forth as definitely as possible the position of the Socialist Party in Germany at the time of his departure from Berlin. He added that, furthermore, the German Socialists desired, before themselves taking up a definite attitude, to ascertain the probable attitude of the French Socialists, in order that, if possible, they might follow a similar line of conduct.

Müller then declared in the most formal manner, and repeated again and again, that beyond a doubt no vote of the Social Democratic Group would be cast in favour of the war credits. "Dass mann für die Kriegskredite stimmt, das halte ich für ausgeschlossen," were his own words. There were, he declared, amongst the leaders of the party, and the members of the Social Democratic Group, only two currents of opinion worth considering: the one in favour of the vote *against* the war credits, the other advocating abstention. Moreover, he added, it seemed that the partisans of the vote *against* would prove to be more numerous than those in favour of abstention.

A French Socialist deputy remarked that, in the event of some high-handed and sudden act of aggression on the part of one of the countries concerned in the dispute, a situation might at some moment be created such that the country or countries attacked would be justified in defending themselves; to this Müller rejoined that, in the opinion of the German Socialists, the idea of making a distinction between a State as aggressor and a State as the attacked, which some Socialists not long since were pleased to consider

as an essential, had become entirely out of date. The present dispute, said he, is the outcome of general causes, which may be focussed into the one idea of capitalist Imperialism, and the responsibility for it recoils upon the governing classes of all the countries concerned. Müller averred, therefore, that he held to be highly improbable the hypothesis that the event should show any one country in the light of the sole aggressor (as if, for example, the Russian army were suddenly to make an incursion into the eastern provinces of Germany), and this, he added, is the only hypothesis upon which the Socialists of a country would be able to regard it as acting entirely from motives of self-preservation.

It was exactly because such an hypothesis was so remote from probability, he added, that it was desirable the Socialists should take up an attitude as nearly as may be identical in all the countries, and especially on either side of the Vosges.

The exchange of views which followed made it clear that the French Socialists were satisfied that the Government of the Republic sincerely desired the maintenance of peace, and that, in consequence, if war were to break out despite the efforts of France, they would only have two alternatives between which to make their choice—the vote in favour of the war credits, and abstention. Müller finished by giving his adhesion to the opinion expressed by the president of the sitting, that abstention in both countries offered the only means of securing unity of action between the Socialists of France and Germany. Nevertheless, it remained well understood that no definite undertaking could be given in that behalf, and that the interchange of views, which had just taken place, had no other aim than to throw light on the conclusions, on either side, which at the decisive moment the two parties would reach, each on its own behalf, and with full freedom of action, while at the same time desiring to safeguard

as thoroughly as possible the international unity of action of the proletariat.

To sum up, the declarations of Müller left a very definite impression to the effect: firstly, that the majority of the German Social Democratic Group was favourable to the vote against the military supplies; secondly, that if nevertheless the partisans of abstention were to carry the day, it would be above all with the object of safeguarding unity of action with the French Socialists; thirdly, that the only hypothesis impossible to contemplate was that of the German Socialists casting a vote in favour of the war credits.

In order that there may be no possible doubt as to the purport of my declarations, I will add that I am convinced of the perfect good faith of my friend Müller, and feel, moreover, that in all probability his statement accurately represented the feelings which inspired the leaders of German Social Democracy up to the last days of July.

I take advantage of this opportunity, my dear Renaudel, to express to you my warm admiration of the courageous and decided manner in which *L'Humanité*, especially since the conference of London, is supporting the Socialist point of view in the struggle which we are conducting against Prussian militarism. We can say this equally as well of the Belgian Socialists, who at this moment are actually under arms—a great part of them serving voluntarily—as of their French comrades, namely, that they would not be fighting as they are if they did not know that what is at stake in the struggle is neither the conquest of German territory, nor the destruction of German national unity; but, on the contrary, the liberation of all countries, the enfranchisement of all nationalities, and the beating to its knees of Prussian Junkerdom; in fine, the making an end of wars and militarism.

Yours cordially,
(Signed) H. DE MAN.

APPENDIX II

IN this pamphlet, little mention has been made of the Austrian Socialists. Austria is farther away from us, and concerns us less than Germany. Moreover, though the ultimatum to Serbia has been the cause of the European conflagration, and though in that particular matter Austria acted on her own account without its being necessary to instigate her to take the initiative, it seems, nevertheless, quite clear that she had no desire to bring about a general conflict, so that it is the German Government which remains solely and really responsible for the great war. In short, the German Social Democracy commanded such a position in the International Union that, after it had spoken, it seemed almost a negligible consideration what the Austrian Socialist party could say upon the same matter, all the more so because substantially the Austrian party was only an appendage of the German.

We have seen (page 37) what attitude Victor Adler took up at the meeting of the European Socialist Committee, and what a disastrous effect his pronouncement had upon the members of the Bureau, and, perhaps to a still greater degree, upon the German delegates. Thus a sharp cleavage became apparent on the 29th July between the principal leader of the German Socialists of Austria, and the Socialists of Germany proper. Since then the latter, in their turn, have been overwhelmed by an outburst of Pan-Germanist Jingoism. But a distinction has subsisted between them in that the outburst seems to have been

still more violent amongst the Socialists of Austria—if we may measure it by comparing the *Vorwärts* with the *Arbeiter Zeitung* of Vienna.

The official organ of the German Socialists of Austria showed itself at the outset inclined to condemn severely the diplomacy of the Dual Monarchy, and assuredly it was not influenced in that direction by any peculiar sympathy with the Serbians ; it was clearly moved by a notion of elementary justice, and by a dread of war. We should be almost tempted to wonder at the freedom with which the *Arbeiter Zeitung* criticised the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, if we reflected that that journal is published in a country where the liberty of the Press is always somewhat precarious, and that, a short time before, one of its issues had been seized, because it had printed the speeches delivered on the subject of militarism at the French Socialist Congress. But that critical spirit did not last. So soon as the Serbian question became (as the journal itself foresaw it would) a European question, it turned its wrath upon Russia, and its criticism of the diplomatic episodes became strangely fragmentary and unreal. As things were turning out, it could very well leave itself to the guidance of its colleague, the *Vorwärts*. It has no more fault to find with the attitude of the Austro-Hungarian Government, and, of course, all that Germany does is for the best in the interests of peace. In these circumstances, the conduct of England and of France is absolutely inexplicable, and in effect, the journal makes no further attempt at explanation. Its articles, henceforth, are nothing but idle talk and sounding phrases. And all that idle talk, after the sitting of the Reichstag on the 4th August, ended in an outburst of hysterical Jingoism.

I have published in the *Mercure de France* of the 1st June a translation of the principal passages of the articles which appeared from the 22nd July to the 5th August.

I content myself with citing here the last article, that of the 5th August. The actual issue of the 5th August is one of those I have not been able to obtain. The following translation is made from an official reproduction of the article as set out in the Swedish review, *Tiden*, for August-September.

THE DAY OF THE GERMAN NATION

Tuesday, 5th August.

We must never forget this 4th August. In whatever way the dice of destiny may fall, we shall most ardently hope for the victory of the sacred cause of the German people. That day of the German Reichstag will stand out in history as one on which was displayed the dignity, grandeur and sublimity of the German spirit.

Whether diplomacy has done well, whether it has done what it should have done, the future will decide. To-day the life of the German nation is at stake, and, therefore, there is no room for doubt or vacillation. The German people is united in its resolve, steadfast as iron, to suffer no one to abase it: neither death, nor devil will succeed in conquering that great and talented people—our German people.

The German Socialists, without a single exception, have supported the vote. I assert that no reproach must be cast upon them if the German Empire and the whole European world is about to be plunged into the horrors of war. But, as the German fatherland is in peril, the Social Democracy takes its stand to defend its country. . . . It does not bargain: never has a party reached a higher and more sublime standard of conduct than this party of the German Social Democracy, which has shown itself worthy of this momentous crisis.

At this hour, therefore, the German people goes

forth to fight as one man, to preserve its existence as a State and as a nation. Opposed to us are nothing but miserable sophistries and unnatural coalitions from which every principle of morality is absent.

14 DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED
LOAN DEPT.

RELIBRARY 5001-5002 042-6358

This book is due on the last date stamped below, or
on the last day of the regular loan period.

Renewal books are subject to library rules.

LIB. 104

MAY 11 1976

RECEIVED

104-1111 MAY 11 1976

LOAN DEPT.

NOV 2 1970 49

REC'D 16 NOV 1979

REC. CIR. MAY 15 1979

RECD AM/C NOV 16 1979

REC'D LD OCT 1970 -2 PM 82

LIBRARY 5001-5002

RELIBRARY 5001-5002



047915503

449108

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

